



Department of
Primary Industries and
Regional Development

*We're working for
Western Australia.*

Houtman Abrolhos Islands Reserve

Draft Management Plan 2022



PR001-21-02

For public comment

[Cover photo: Basile Island shacks. Credit: Colin Ingram, DBCA.]

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Introduction

The Houtman Abrolhos (the Abrolhos) is an archipelago of 210 islands, islets and rocks surrounded by coral reef located about 60 kilometres west of Geraldton. The marine and terrestrial environment of the Abrolhos is unique and supports outstanding natural, cultural heritage, fishing and recreation values. It has long been identified as a “jewel” of Western Australia and the islands were originally declared a Class A Reserve in 1929.

In October 2017, the State Government made a commitment to develop a new whole-of-government approach to better protect the Abrolhos, and in July 2019 the Houtman Abrolhos Islands National Park (the National Park) was created. The creation of the National Park, together with State Government’s release of the *Houtman Abrolhos Islands Strategic Direction 2020 – 24* (the Strategic Direction), signals the intention to better position the Abrolhos Islands and surrounding waters as a sustainable, nature-based tourism destination, and to support regional economic growth.

The remaining terrestrial island area comprises Class A Reserve 20253 (**the Abrolhos Reserve**), which is managed by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) and vested in the Minister for Fisheries for the purpose of “conservation of flora and fauna, tourism and for purposes associated with the fishing and aquaculture industries”. The Abrolhos Reserve has a long-standing history of economic resource use, and rock lobster fishing is at the centre of social and economic life. Generations of fishermen and their families have lived on the Abrolhos Reserve, which over time has created strong community and family connections, unique fishing heritage values and a remarkable story of the Abrolhos fisherman’s way of life.



Image 1 – Roma Island, Easter Group. Credit: Tourism WA.

The Strategic Direction shares the State Government’s vision and key initiatives that will inform future management of the Abrolhos across the land and water, i.e., the National Park, the Abrolhos Reserve and the Abrolhos Islands Fish Habitat Protection Area (FHFA).

The Strategic Direction provides a clear vision for the Abrolhos Islands:

“To provide a world-class sustainable tourism experience and create new jobs and economic opportunities in the Mid West region, while protecting the unique natural, cultural heritage, fishing and community values of the Abrolhos.”

Houtman Abrolhos Islands Strategic Direction 2020 – 24

DPIRD’s strategic intent and goals to protect, grow and innovate align with this initiative. DPIRD is committed to working with relevant government agencies, industry and the community to achieve Government’s vision for the Abrolhos Islands and the Western Australian community. Our purpose is to create enduring prosperity for all Western Australians by ensuring that primary industries and regions are key contributors to the Government’s agenda for economic growth and diversification, job creation, strong communities and better places.

Management planning processes are currently underway for the National Park, Abrolhos Reserve and Abrolhos FHPA. The management planning process for the National Park is being undertaken by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) and information on this process can be found here - www.dbca.wa.gov.au. The management planning processes for the Abrolhos Reserve and Abrolhos FHPA are being undertaken by DPIRD.

The Houtman Abrolhos Islands Reserve Draft Management Plan 2022 (this plan) relates specifically to the terrestrial islands of the Abrolhos Reserve. It seeks to address current, new and emerging pressures and issues facing management of the Abrolhos Reserve, and takes account of the current and anticipated growth in tourism.

A comprehensive independent community engagement process was undertaken during 2021 to inform the development of this draft plan and the draft management plan for the Abrolhos FHPA. The community engagement process illustrated that there is much about the future management of the Abrolhos that all stakeholders agree on and have a similar attitude towards.

“Overall, the clear message is that everything should be managed to achieve low impact and light touch. Stakeholders’ aspirations are for the Abrolhos to remain a place for community to connect, to belong, to share with the next generation, and to keep it as a place of wonder and peace, and not to be just a tourism destination.”

Abrolhos Reserve and Fish Habitat Protection Area Consultation Report 2022

There are also some issues where there is clear conflict between and within sectors. Therein lies the challenge for Government and this draft plan aims to achieve an appropriate balance between the needs of nature, visitors and workers.

“By managing a healthy co-existence between the needs of nature, those that want to visit and those that work here and have for generations, a special place can be retained for the future and shared sustainably with this generation of the Abrolhos community.”

Abrolhos Reserve and Fish Habitat Protection Area Consultation Report 2022

This draft plan should be read together with the following documents:

1. *Houtman Abrolhos Islands Strategic Direction 2020 – 2024*;
2. *Abrolhos Reserve and Fish Habitat Protection Area Consultation Report 2022*;
3. *Houtman Abrolhos Islands Fish Habitat Protection Area Part 1: Draft Management Plan 2022*;
4. *Houtman Abrolhos Islands Fish Habitat Protection Area Part 2: Draft Zoning Scheme 2022*; and
5. *Houtman Abrolhos Islands National Park Draft Management Plan 2021*.

Other DPIRD documents of relevance include:

1. *Primary Industries Plan 2020 – 2024*; and
2. *Strategic Intent 2022 – 2026*.

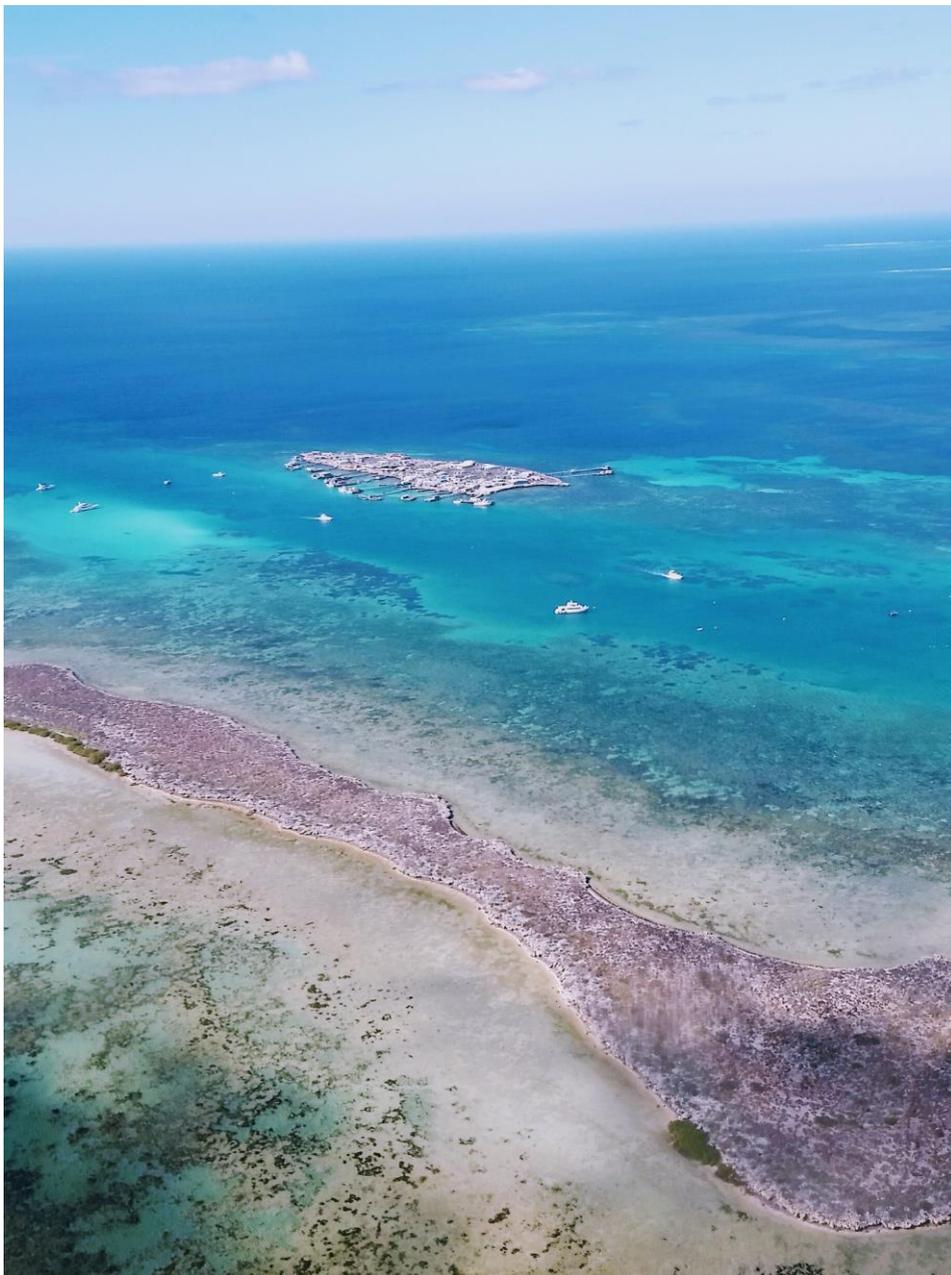


Image 2 – Aerial view of Pigeon Island, Wallabi Group. Credit: DPIRD.

Invitation to Comment

The *Houtman Abrolhos Islands Reserve Draft Management Plan 2022* has been released for a six-week period to provide the public with an opportunity to comment on how the Abrolhos Reserve is proposed to be managed during the next 10 years.

The draft plan can be viewed online at <http://www.fish.wa.gov.au/About-Us/Public-Comment/Pages/default.aspx>. This includes a link to the online submission form.

The deadline for submissions is 5:00pm on **3 April 2022**.

The draft management plan will be reviewed in light of submissions received. A summary of public submissions will be made available along with the final management plan.

Please note that a draft management plan has also been prepared for the Abrolhos FHPA. It can also be viewed at the above link.

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1. General Overview

1.1 Planning Area and Use

There are three main island groups at the Abrolhos: Wallabi (including North Island), Easter and Pelsaert, spread over 100 kilometres from north to south. The State waters surrounding the Abrolhos have special status as a gazetted FHPA which includes all waters from the high water mark of the Abrolhos Islands out to three nautical miles, an area of approximately 2,500 square kilometres. Refer **Map 1**.

This plan covers the Abrolhos Reserve tenure which comprises 22 occupied islands (including five parts of islands), equating to 58 hectares, or approximately 3% of the total land area to the high water mark (**Maps 2 to 7**). The majority of Abrolhos Reserve land is leased to the owners of 'camps' who are operating pursuant to commercial rock lobster and aquaculture licences operating in waters surrounding the Abrolhos Islands. The Abrolhos Reserve tenure also includes the intertidal area between high water mark and low water mark on all the islands of the Abrolhos, including those in the National Park. The Abrolhos Reserve is vested in the Minister for Fisheries.

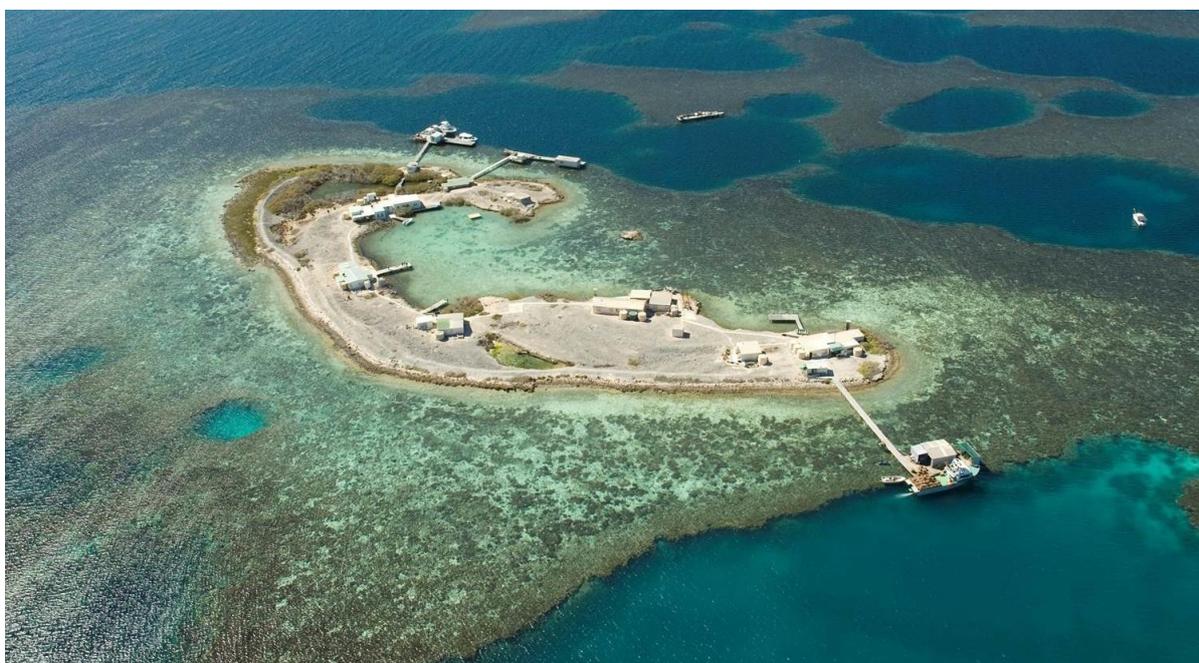
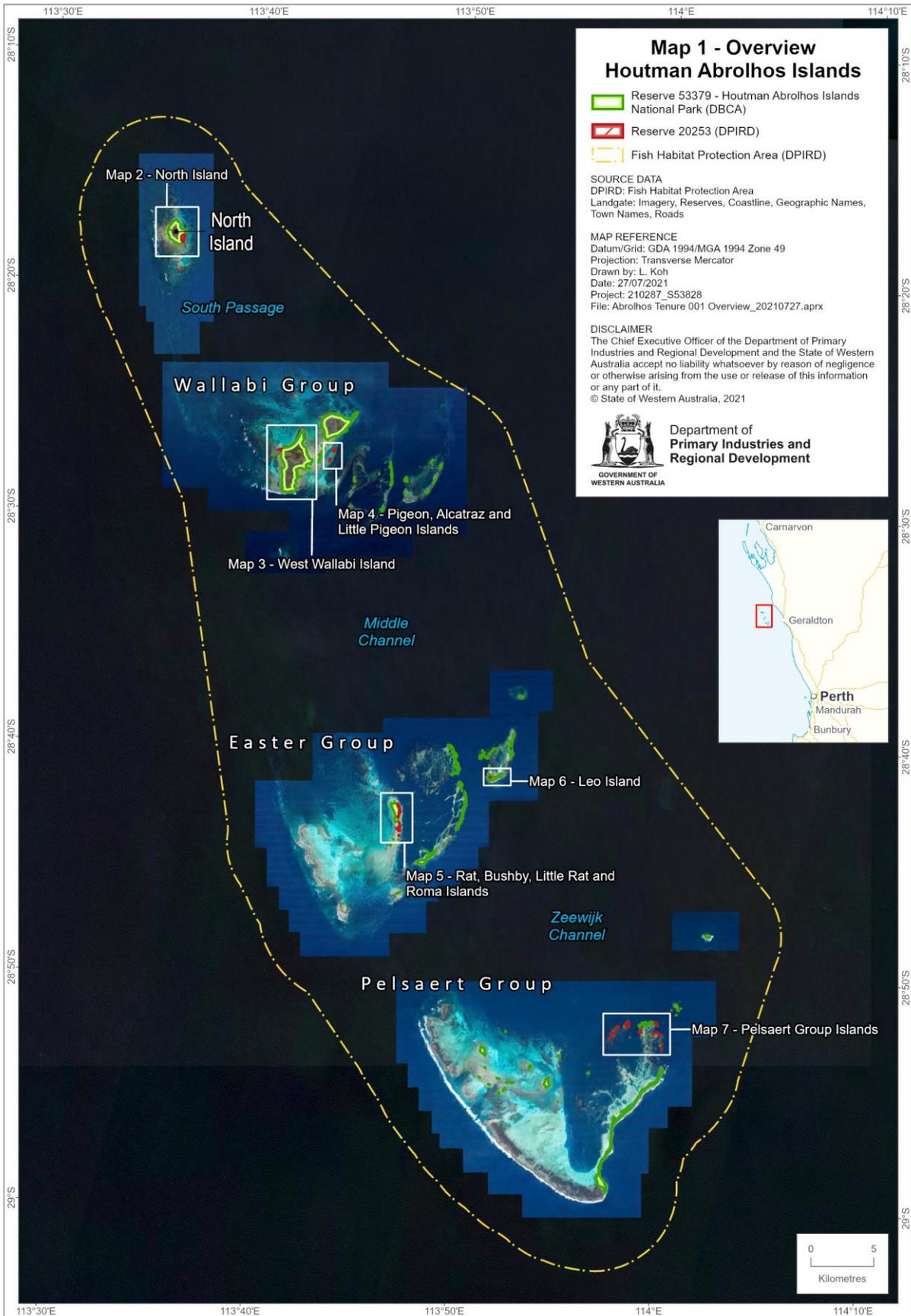


Image 3 – Aerial view of Uncle Margie Island, Pelsaert Group. Credit: DPIRD.

The remaining terrestrial area is a National Park, vested in the Conservation and Parks Commission and managed by DBCA. The National Park boundary is at high water mark for all the islands except Beacon and East Wallabi Islands, where a portion of the park extends over the intertidal and adjacent water as a curtilage to include the jetties which provide boat access to these islands. Five Abrolhos islands comprise both National Park and Abrolhos Reserve tenure: North, West Wallabi, Rat, Leo and Newman Islands. The Abrolhos Reserve portion of these islands are covered by this plan.

Arrangements specific to the National Park can be obtained from DBCA's website at www.dbca.wa.gov.au. Similarly, management arrangements for the Abrolhos FHPA can be found on DPIRD's fisheries website at www.fish.wa.gov.au.

Map 1 – Overview map of the Houtman Abrolhos Islands.



Map 2 – North Island, Wallabi Group.



Map 3 – West Wallabi Island, Wallabi Group.



Map 4 – Pigeon, Alcatraz and Little Pigeon Islands, Wallabi Group.



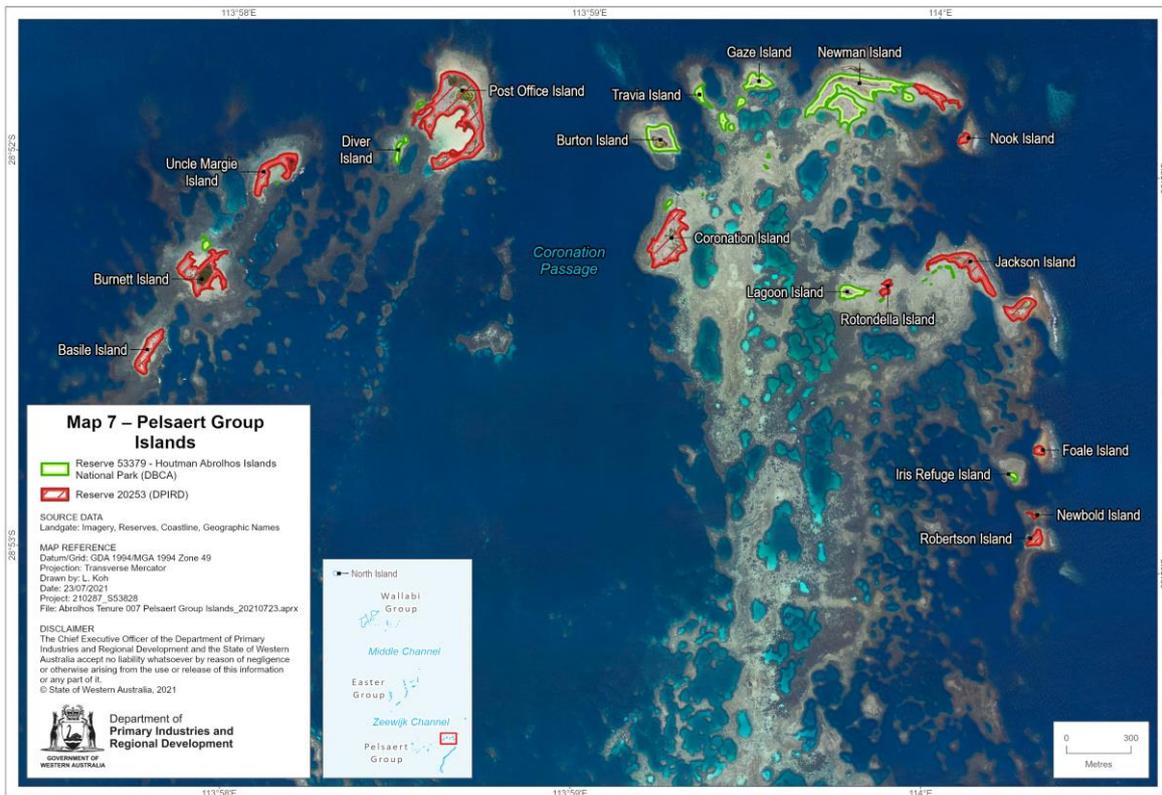
Map 5 – Rat, Bushby, Little Rat and Roma Islands, Easter Group.



Map 6 – Leo Island, Easter Group.



Map 7 – Pelsaert Group Islands.



Current Industry Snapshot

West Coast Rock Lobster Fishery

Today, the major commercial fishery at the Abrolhos is the West Coast Rock Lobster Managed Fishery, which targets the western rock lobster (*Panulirus cygnus*). The Fishery has a long-standing commercial and economic history at the islands and with a landed value of \$417 million (2019-20) is Australia's most valuable single-species commercial fishery, with around 18 per cent of the season's catch coming from Abrolhos waters. Commercial rock lobster fishers have camps and jetties on the Abrolhos Reserve to support their commercial activities. Changes in fishery management arrangements over recent years has resulted in reduced occupation of some fishing camps.



Image 4 – Carrier boat receiving rock lobster catch. Credit: DPIRD.



Image 5 – Western rock lobster.

Credit: Abrolhos Adventures.



Image 6 – Cray pots, Rat Island.

Credit: DPIRD.

Aquaculture

A range of aquaculture enterprises operate or are proposed within the Abrolhos FHPA, including western rock oysters, coral, seaweed, clams, sea cucumbers, sponges, sea urchins, cuttlefish, green algae and marine finfish (yellowtail kingfish). Australian pearls are also farmed in the pristine Abrolhos waters. Pearling and aquaculture operators also have camps and jetties on the Abrolhos Reserve to support their commercial activities. The 3000-hectare Mid West Aquaculture Development Zone has been established in the FHPA to encourage large-scale commercial aquaculture development in the area.



Image 7 – Sorting pearl shell.
Credit: Simon Cowling.

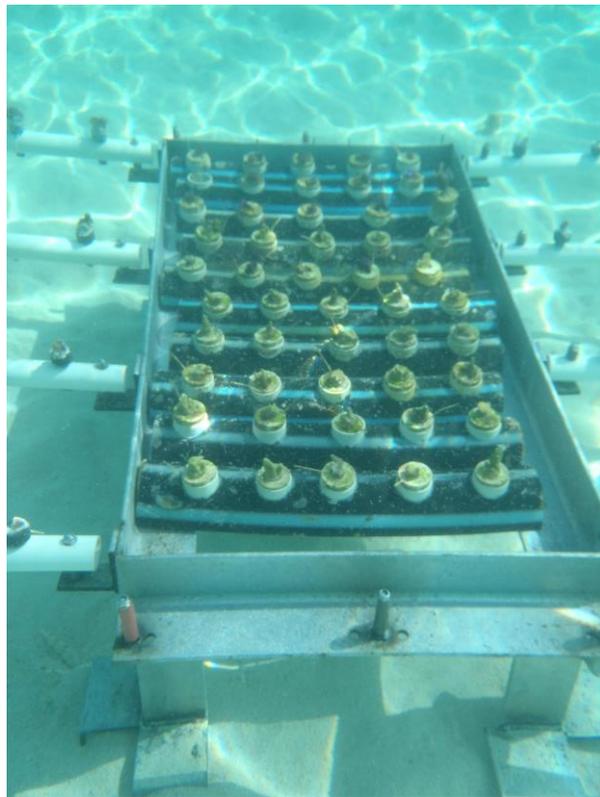


Image 8 – Commercial live coral racks.
Credit: Abrolhos Coral and Live Rock.



Image 9 – Pearl baskets.
Credit: DPIRD.



Image 10 – Abrolhos pearls.
Credit: DPIRD.

Tourism

There are a number of commercial tour operators that visit the Arolhos offering largely marine-based tourism experiences, such as diving, snorkelling, fishing and wildlife viewing. Passengers are able to access the National Park to go for walks, relax on the sandy beaches, or visit cultural heritage sites associated with the remarkable 17th – 19th century shipwreck history. Visitors are also attracted to the unique sense of place and vibrant fishing communities located on the Arolhos Reserve, and have a keen interest in learning about the cray fishing industry and pearling and aquaculture operations.



Image 11 – Tourists visiting the Arolhos Islands. Credit: DPIRD.



Image 12 – Charter flight over Rat Island. Credit: DPIRD.

1.2 Key Values, Management Focus and Opportunities

The table below provides a snapshot of the opportunities that could be realised based on the proposed management of the Abrolhos Reserve's key values. All sectors across government, fishing and aquaculture, tourism, heritage, conservation and the community acknowledge that improved management arrangements will lead to better outcomes for the Abrolhos and for the Western Australian community.

Table 1 – Key values, management focus and opportunities.

Key Values	Management Focus	Opportunities
<p><u>Natural</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seabirds and migratory shorebirds Australian sea lions Mangrove communities Threatened reptiles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protection of seabird breeding and nesting areas Minimising impacts of human disturbance Strengthening biosecurity arrangements Improving waste and wastewater management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced Abrolhos community stewardship Greater protection for wildlife and habitats Improved biosecurity management Best practice environmental standards Collaborative research and monitoring
<p><u>Cultural Heritage</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maritime archaeology Human history Fishing communities Building character 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitor education, interpretation and awareness of fishing heritage and guano mining heritage values Protecting and maintaining cultural heritage sites Retention of fishing community built character 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater appreciation of cultural heritage values Sharing the story of the unique fishing heritage and fisherman's way of life, and guano mining heritage New discoveries of terrestrial cultural heritage sites
<p><u>Tourism</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raw and natural beauty Remoteness Marine and terrestrial biodiversity Unique sense of place Extraordinary wildlife experiences Remarkable shipwreck history Colonial maritime history 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrated, whole-of-government management approach Establishing tourism licensing and management controls Facilitating opportunities for quality low impact, ecologically sensitive nature and culture-based visitor experiences Enabling opportunities for tour operators to have operational bases on the Abrolhos Reserve to support their business Achieving a balance between providing visitor access and opportunities for tourism, while also protecting the natural and cultural heritage values and fishing community lifestyle Identifying overnight stay opportunities Visitor education and promotion of appropriate behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional economic benefits Extraordinary world class quality tourism product Enhancing the existing visitor experience through business diversification and development Increasing the tourism potential of North Island and the Easter Group islands Overnight land-based tourist accommodation options Expedition cruise ship day tour visitation Commercial events and other functions

Key Values	Management Focus	Opportunities
<p><u>Fishing and Aquaculture</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial rock lobster fishery • Developing aquaculture industry • Unique working lifestyle • Wilderness fishing experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that appropriate infrastructure access continues to be available to support active rock lobster operations • Supporting infrastructure access for commercially viable and productive aquaculture operations • Enabling equitable access for other commercial fisheries and fishing tour operators where there is a demonstrated need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational access for other commercial fisheries • Operational access for the charter fishing sector • New opportunities for wilderness fishing ventures • Greater diversity of tourism offerings • Regional economic benefits
<p><u>Abrolhos community</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of place • Community spirit • Island stewardship • Multi-generational • Social connections • Family connections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention of a vibrant and engaged Abrolhos community • Building relationships and trust with the Abrolhos community • Protecting social and community values of the fisher lifestyle • Facilitating economic development for new commercial uses • Improving camp management and utilisation of camps • Improving telecommunications and digital coverage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New and diverse economic opportunities • Healthy coexistence of fishing, aquaculture and tourism • Repurposing underutilised fishing camps • Improved quality, aesthetics and safety of camps • Improved mobile access and public telecommunications to support community life, and businesses

1.3 Management Context

Legislation and policy

The *Land Administration Act 1997* (the LA Act) deals with the management of Crown land and provides for the creation, administration and management of reserves over Crown land or waters. Reserve tenure is usually applied to Crown land that holds intrinsic community value or is of high conservation value that should be preserved and maintained for the benefit of future generations.

Under the LA Act, the Abrolhos Reserve is classified as Class A, which provides the greatest degree of protection. The LA Act places the care, control and management of the Abrolhos Reserve with the Minister for Fisheries in accordance with a s46 Management Order. The Abrolhos Reserve is managed by DPIRD on behalf of the Minister for Fisheries for conservation, tourism, fishing and aquaculture purposes. It is managed in accordance with the Reserve Management Order, the *Fish Resources Management Act 1994* (the FRMA) and the *Fish Resources Management Regulations 1995* (the Regulations).

The *Aquatic Resources Management Act 2016* (ARMA) will replace the FRMA and the *Pearling Act 1990*, to become the primary legislation used to manage fishing, aquaculture, pearling and aquatic resources in Western Australia. Final amendments to the ARMA passed on 19 August 2021 have opened the pathway to full implementation. It is envisaged that new, separate regulations for the Abrolhos Reserve and Abrolhos FHPA will be developed under the ARMA.

Other State, local laws and policies apply to the management of the Abrolhos Reserve and these are mentioned throughout this plan.

Once finalised, this plan, along with the draft management plan for the Abrolhos FHPA, will replace the existing *Houtman Abrolhos Islands Management Plan (Fisheries Management Paper No. 260, November 2012)*. The final approved management plan will remain in place until it is formally reviewed and updated.

Whole-of-government management

A range of State Government agencies have management responsibilities at the Abrolhos. With the creation of the National Park in July 2019, the State Government has committed to developing a collaborative, whole-of-government approach to managing the lands and waters of the Abrolhos and creating sustainable economic opportunities.

DPIRD has primary responsibility for management of the Abrolhos Reserve and Abrolhos FHPA. DPIRD and the Mid West Development Commission are also responsible for facilitating regional opportunities to drive economic growth and job creation.

DBCA has primary responsibility for managing the National Park in accordance with the *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* (the CALM Act), including protecting its values and facilitating land-based tourism and recreation experiences for the community within the National Park.

The **WA Museum** is responsible for management of underwater cultural heritage and maritime archaeological sites under the Commonwealth *Underwater Cultural Heritage Act 2018* (UCH Act) and the State *Maritime Archaeology Act 1973* (MA Act).

The Abrolhos Islands are within the local government area of the **City of Greater Geraldton** (CoGG) and as such local government by-laws and local planning schemes apply, including the *Building Act 2011* and *Building Regulations 2012*. The CoGG also has an important strategic role in driving and leading tourism in the region.

There are a number of other agencies that have applicable legislation and deliver important services that support management of the Abrolhos including Tourism WA, the Department of Transport and the Department of Health.

During 2020, the State Government developed and released the Strategic Direction which outlines key management priorities and initiatives across the land and waters of the Abrolhos. The Strategic Direction advocates development of a governance framework built on collaborative partnerships across key agencies. This plan is informed by the Strategic Direction, together with management plans for the National Park and the Abrolhos FHPA. The DPIRD Abrolhos planning framework is shown in **Figure 1**.

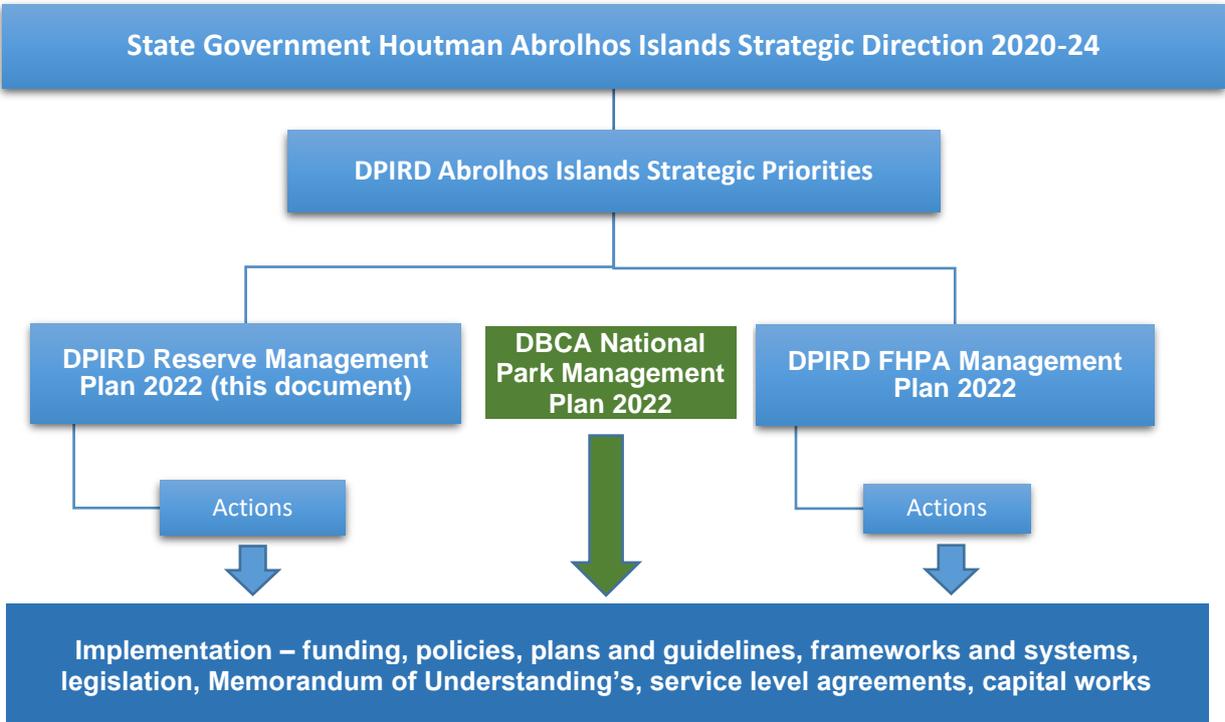


Figure 1 – DPIRD’s Abrolhos planning framework.

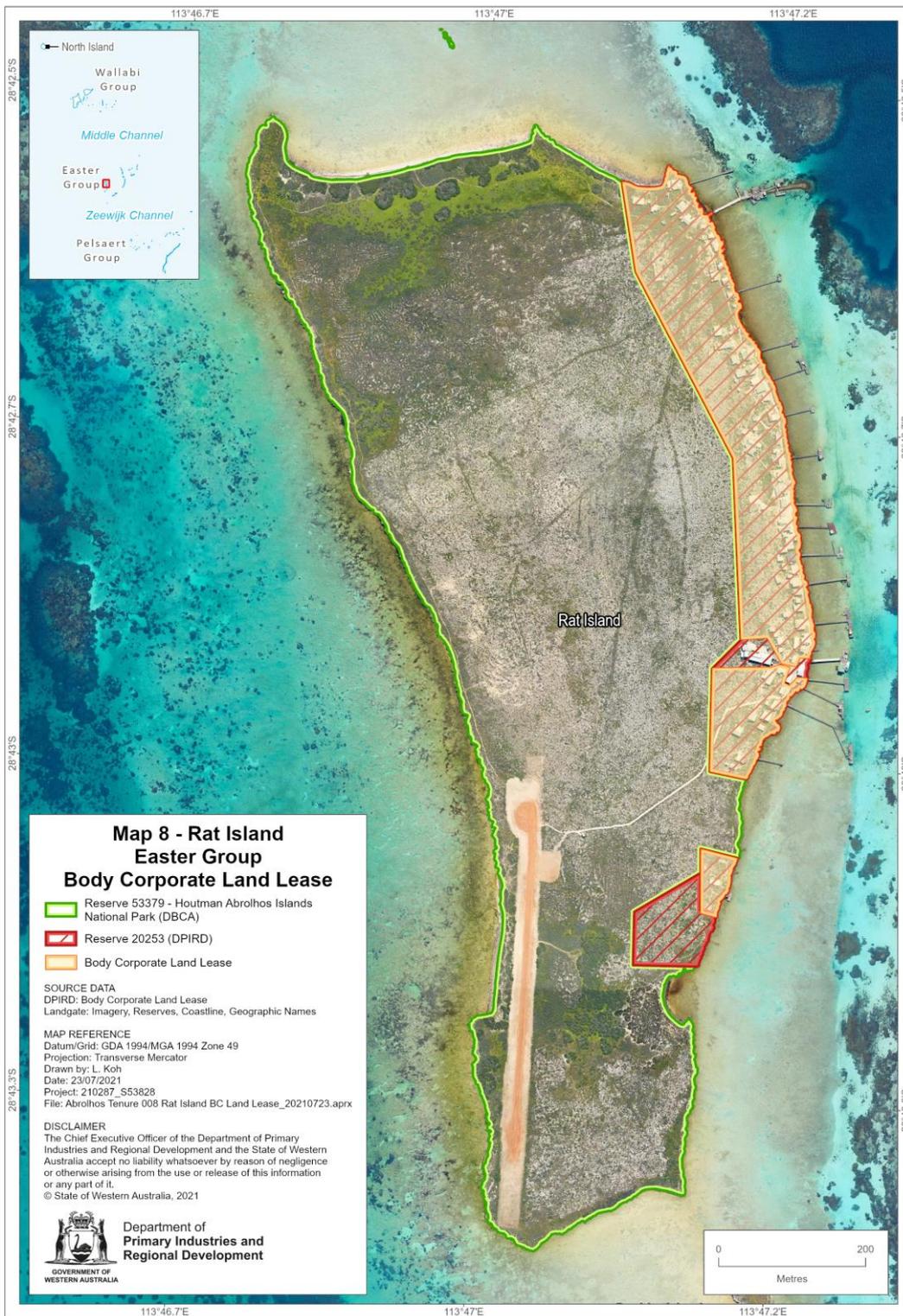
Abrolhos Islands Bodies Corporate

Under the Reserve Management Order, the Minister for Fisheries may lease or licence land used or occupied on the Abrolhos Reserve. Most of the Abrolhos Reserve is leased and occupied by holders of a Zone A commercial rock lobster Managed Fishery Licence (MFL) and aquaculture licensees. These licensees are permitted to establish camps, jetties and other supporting infrastructure on, or adjoining to, the Abrolhos Reserve.

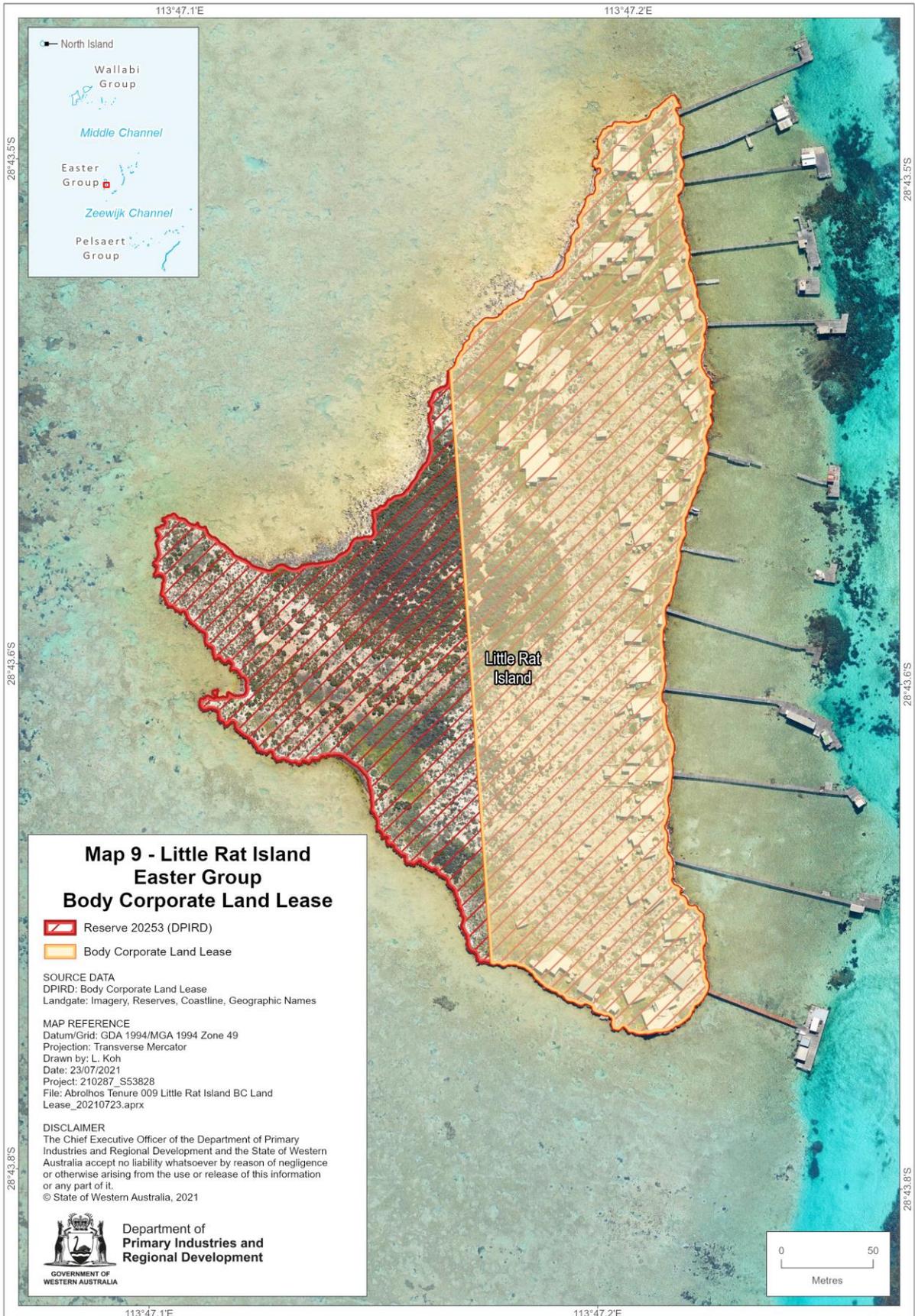
In 2007, the lease holders formed the Abrolhos Islands Bodies Corporate which comprise four constituted ‘bodies corporate’: North Island, Wallabi Group, Easter Group and Pelsaert Group. Each body corporate holds a separate 21-year lease with the Minister with three of the groups signing new leases in 2013. The Easter Group Body Corporate continues to operate with a lease signed in 2007.

Prior to July 2019, the Abrolhos Reserve included all lands of the Abrolhos Islands. Following creation of the National Park, the Abrolhos Reserve reduced to approximately 3% of the total land area to high water mark, with body corporate leased land now comprising 85% of the Abrolhos Reserve. All Reserve islands (or portions of islands) are comprised wholly of leased land, with the exception of Rat, Little Rat, Post Office and Coronation Islands, which include areas of unleased Reserve land (**Maps 8 – 11**).

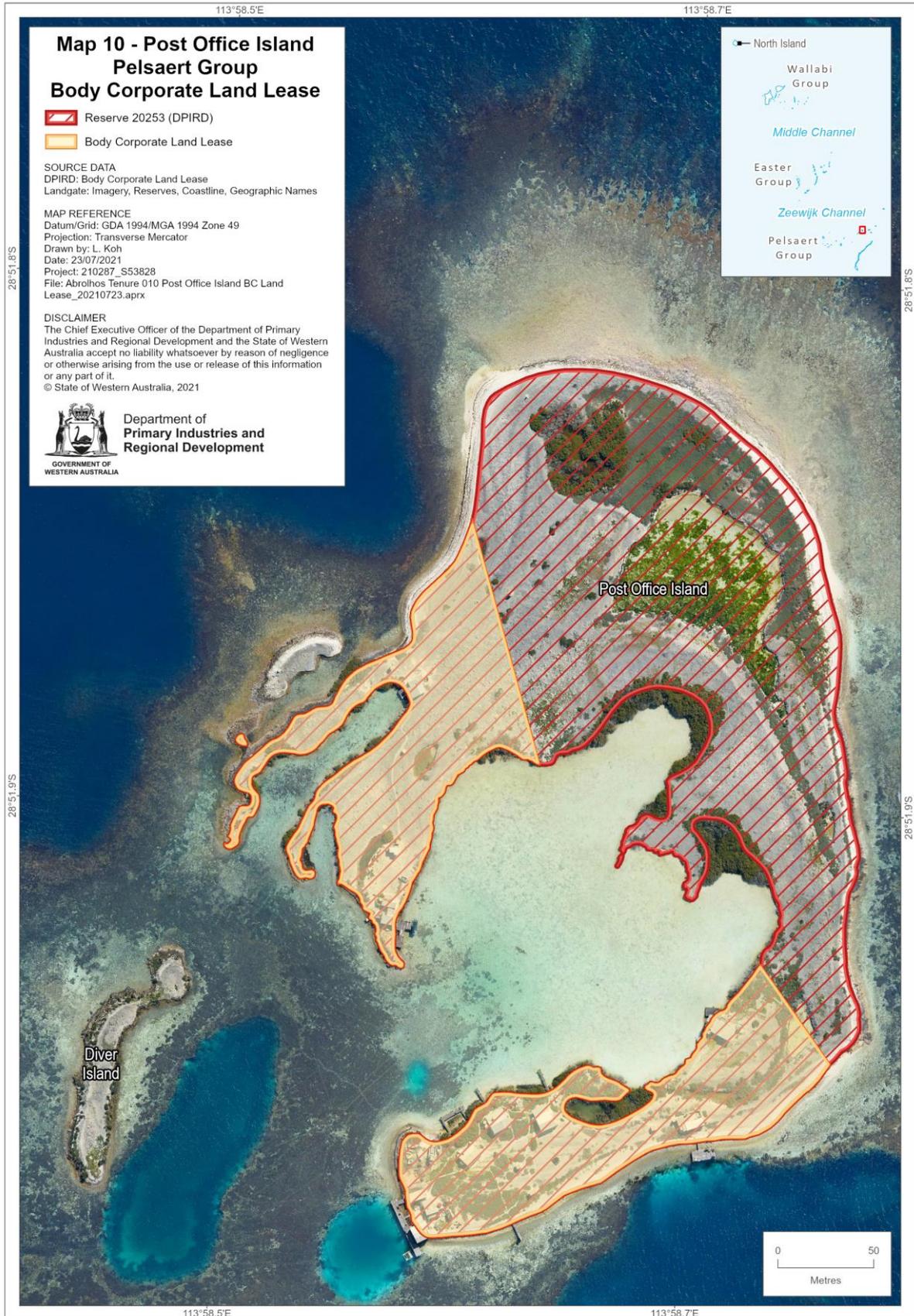
Map 8 – Rat Island Easter Group Body Corporate Land Lease.



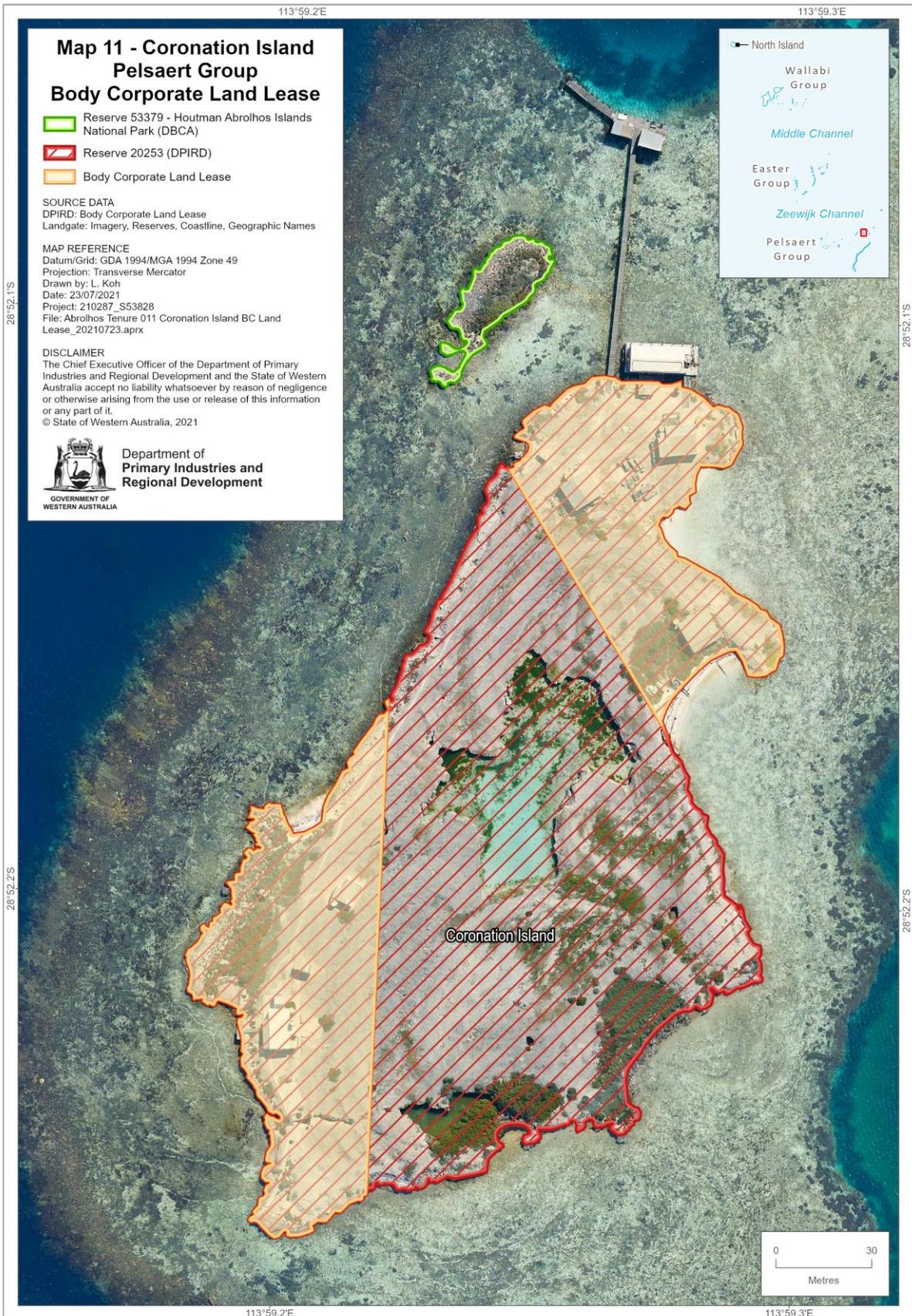
Map 9 – Little Rat Island Easter Group Body Corporate Land Lease.



Map 10 – Post Office Island Pelsaert Group Body Corporate Land Lease.



Map 11 – Coronation Island Pelsaert Group Body Corporate Land Lease.



Management arrangements for body corporate land apply to a wide range of activities including but not limited to: construction and modification of jetties; construction and modifications to buildings and other facilities; power and maintenance; disposal of waste; management of wastewater; environmental management; emergency management; visitor use; use of vehicles; noise; biosecurity; weed control; and behavioural standards.

The key roles and responsibilities of the bodies corporate are to:

- improve environmental management and stewardship by members;
- review building applications and camp transfers and provide advice to DPIRD;
- approve membership applications;
- maintain building standards in accordance with relevant building codes;
- resolve neighbour disputes by members;
- manage community owned infrastructure;
- coordinate community services support; and
- represent members' views to DPIRD and State Government.

Stakeholders

Within the WA community, there are several sectors with an interest in the Abrolhos Reserve including:

- Camp owners (bodies corporate members)
- Aquaculture operators, the Aquaculture Council of WA
- Commercial fishers, the WA Fishing Industry Council and industry associations
- Recreational fishers, Recfishwest
- Charter fishing operators
- Tourists and regular visitors
- Marine tourism operators
- Conservation groups
- Heritage groups
- Researchers and research institutions

A comprehensive independent stakeholder engagement project involving the key sectors listed above was undertaken during 2021. The outcomes of this community engagement process are outlined in the *Abrolhos Reserve and Fish Habitat Protection Area Consultation Report 2022* and have informed the management focus, objectives and actions in this draft plan. Future planning and management for strategic priorities on the Abrolhos Reserve will also have regard for the findings of the report, in addition to submissions received during the public comment period for this draft plan.

Performance assessment

There are 69 management actions proposed in this draft plan. All actions are prioritised with recommended timeframes for implementation (refer Appendix 1).

Progress towards achieving the management objectives of this plan will be demonstrated by regular monitoring, evaluation and reporting undertaken by DPIRD to investigate the effectiveness of management actions and identify opportunities for improvement. The plan will be subject to annual monitoring as well as a five-year mid-cycle review commencing in 2027.

2. Strategic Priorities

2.1 Nature Conservation and Protection

The significant and unique natural values of the Abrolhos have long been recognised – most recently in establishment of the National Park. An abundance of research studies have been undertaken on island geology, seabirds, reptiles, the Abrolhos painted button quail, tammar wallaby, and flora and vegetation communities, and a comprehensive inventory of the land conservation values of the Abrolhos was undertaken in 2003.

While a significant portion of the Abrolhos Reserve has been cleared to allow for the building of camps, jetties and other infrastructure to support commercial fishing and aquaculture operations, the Abrolhos Reserve still holds important natural values, which need to be managed and protected. Further, a number of the Reserve islands which have adjacent National Park tenure have high terrestrial biodiversity values, including North, West Wallabi and Rat Islands. In addition, the adjacent marine environment of the Abrolhos FHPA is well-known for its exceptional biodiversity values.

Natural values

Plants and vegetation communities

The Abrolhos Reserve supports a variety of terrestrial plant species and communities, which are utilised by a diverse range of fauna. All native terrestrial flora at the Abrolhos is protected under the State *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*. A number of vegetation communities at the Abrolhos are recognised as being of conservation significance including mangroves, shrubland and saltbush flats.

Mangrove communities, in particular, are found on some Reserve islands including Little Rat, Leo, Burnett, Uncle Margie, Post Office, Coronation and Newman Islands. These communities are highly productive, and play an important role in supporting other species such as algae, molluscs and crustaceans and provide breeding habitat for fish, birds and Australian sea lions.

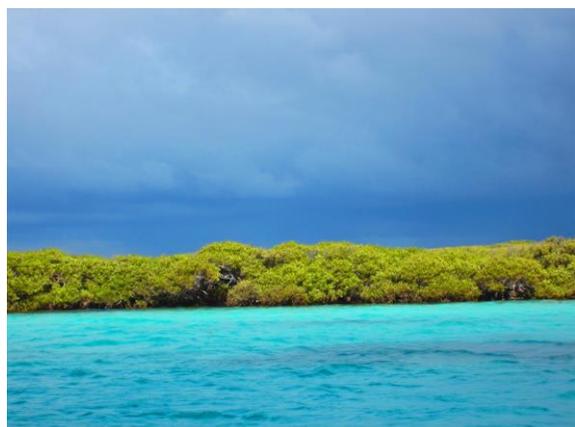


Image 13 & 14 – Abrolhos mangrove communities. Credit: DPIRD.

Seabirds and migratory shorebirds

The Abrolhos is one of the most significant seabird nesting areas in the eastern Indian Ocean. Over two million birds breed on the islands and small rocky atolls in the Abrolhos. The mixture of species is unique, as subtropical and tropical species, and littoral and oceanic foragers, share the breeding islands. A total of 95 bird species have been recorded as residents or visitors to the islands and many of the migrant species are protected by international agreements. Conservation significant birds include the Abrolhos painted button-quail, the Australian lesser noddy, the common noddy, wedge-tailed shearwater, little shearwater, roseate tern, fairy tern, and sooty tern.

Important Reserve islands for seabird nesting and breeding include North, West Wallabi and Rat Islands. The sandy beach habitat on some of the intertidal areas of the Abrolhos Reserve also provide important feeding habitat for a variety of migratory shorebird species, and nesting habitat for some seabirds.



Image 15 – Seabird rookery on Rat Island. Credit: DPIRD.

Mammals

The Abrolhos Islands represent the most northern location in the distribution of Australian sea lions and are used for haul out and breeding. There are a number of locations on the Abrolhos Reserve used as haul out (resting) areas. There are no known breeding locations on the Abrolhos Reserve. It is understood that sea lion breeding mainly occurs in the Easter and Pelsaert Groups, on islands within the National Park. Sea lions are known to use mangrove areas as nurseries for their young.



Image 16 – Australian sea lion resting on a jetty. Credit: DPIRD.

The main land mammal living on the Abrolhos Reserve is the tammar wallaby. The population on West Wallabi Island is of particular biodiversity importance. The tammar wallaby population interacts with the occupied community on the Abrolhos Reserve, and it is necessary to consider measures that mitigate risks to the Island population.



Image 17 – Tammar wallaby. Credit: DBCA, Anthony Desmond.

Reptiles

There are 26 terrestrial reptile species on the islands. The Houtman Abrolhos spiny tailed skink and the Abrolhos dwarf bearded dragon are both endemic to the Abrolhos. The spiny tailed skink and king skink in particular, are important species found on the Abrolhos Reserve and are abundant on North, Pigeon and Rat Islands. There is also a large population of carpet pythons found on West Wallabi Island.



Image 18 – Abrolhos king skinks on Pigeon Island. Credit: DPIRD.

Management issues and threats

The main threats impacting the natural values of the Abrolhos Reserve are associated with human disturbance, biosecurity risks related to introduced pests and weeds, waste and pollution, and climate change.

Human disturbance

Given the majority of the Abrolhos Reserve is inhabited, human disturbance is a key threat to its natural values. Clearing land for the purpose of building and erecting structures on the Abrolhos Reserve reduces populations of plant communities and results in habitat loss. Human presence can alter animal behaviour and disturb important feeding, resting and breeding activity, particularly for migratory seabirds and Australian sea lions. Artificial lighting from boats and fishing camps can impact wildlife by causing disorientation in seabirds that are active at night and can also result in physiological changes in tamar wallabies. Buildings, communication towers, and other land-based infrastructure, as well as aircraft activity, can also impact on seabird populations.

There is a clear stakeholder view that management of the natural values should focus on protecting seabird breeding and nesting areas from human disturbance, and government investment in funding for ongoing research and monitoring programs to improve knowledge and support adaptive management.



Image 19 – Crested terns nesting at the Abrolhos. Credit: DPIRD.

The North Island, Wallabi Group and Pelsaert Group Bodies Corporate are required, under their leases, to prepare environmental risk management plans to mitigate the impacts of their presence and operations on the surrounding natural environment. DPIRD will work with the bodies corporate to ensure these plans are reviewed and address current issues. Any new Reserve users will also be required to prepare an environmental risk management plan related to their specific activities. DPIRD will provide guidance on development of these plans.

Biosecurity

One of the greatest threats to the species living on and around the Abrolhos islands is the introduction of pest animals and diseases. Pest animals can have significant impacts on natural ecosystems through predation, habitat destruction, and competition for food and space. The most common way that pests and diseases can arrive is via people – on the hulls of vessels, and in food and household items, and building material brought over from the mainland. Currently the only pest animal species found at the Abrolhos is the house mouse on North Island (and anecdotally on some other islands). The house mouse has been eradicated on Rat Island, and black rats and cats have been removed. Tamar wallabies were introduced on North Island and have significantly damaged the natural habitat, contributing to the likely local extinction of the Abrolhos painted-button quail. A program to remove the introduced tamar wallaby population on North Island has been undertaken in recent years.

Weeds pose a significant threat to the Abrolhos, and adverse impacts on ecosystems include species competition, disruption of ecosystem processes and loss of fauna habitat. Currently 110 weed species have been recorded across the islands and most were introduced by the guano mining and fishing industries. Over the years, weeds have been introduced to inhabited islands as garden plants and the number of weed species is higher on the inhabited Reserve islands.

Golden Crownbeard, currently found on Pigeon Island, is a key priority weed species and has been the target of ongoing control. The Common Prickly Pear, currently found on Rat Island, is a declared pest species in WA with a high ecological impact. Tamarisk, currently found on Rat, Pigeon and North Islands, is highly invasive and alters habitats.

Waste and pollution

Waste on the Abrolhos Reserve is produced by the fishing and aquaculture communities and is largely made up of food, household and building waste, and sewage. Under their relevant leases, camp owners are responsible for keeping their camp, and any associated jetty or foreshore areas, free from waste. Furthermore, camp owners on North Island, the Wallabi Group and the Pelsaert Group must comply with the Abrolhos Islands Waste Management Standards. Current requirements for waste management on the Reserve provide for some types of waste to be disposed of by use of an incinerator, while other materials must be returned to the mainland for appropriate disposal.

Burn cages, which have previously been used on the end of some jetties, are currently being phased out and all existing burn cages are in the process of being decommissioned and removed. The future use of burn cages for waste disposal purposes will not be permitted on the Reserve, or adjoining jetties. Reserve users will only be permitted to use incinerators of an approved type, and the number of incinerators of an approved type will be strictly limited. There is a strong preference for all rubbish to be returned to the mainland for appropriate disposal.



Image 20 – Old burn cage on a jetty. **Image 21** – Incinerator on the Reserve.

Credit: DPIRD.

In regards to wastewater, the Regulations require that sewage must be disposed of by use of a saltwater flushing outfall pipe feeding directly into the sea, a septic tank disposal system, or an approved sewage disposal system at an approved site.

In 2013, the North Island, Wallabi Group and Pelsaert Group Body Corporate leases were amended to implement conditions to improve wastewater management outcomes. This included the requirement to treat black and grey water to a secondary level prior to discharge; to shroud black water and grey water outfalls; and to prohibit discharge into an enclosed water body.

There has been some progress made to improve wastewater management at the Abrolhos by some camp owners in recent years, and the current building application process requires all new camps to have approved wastewater treatment systems through the CoGG. However there are a number of land-based toilets on the Abrolhos Reserve that still discharge directly into the soil or ocean without any form of treatment. There is a need to continue to improve wastewater management on the Abrolhos Reserve to ensure that untreated waste is not being discharged into the marine environment.



Image 22 – Old sewage outfall pipe. **Image 23** – Approved septic tank system.

Credit: DPIRD.

All stakeholders have expressed some level of concern regarding current waste and wastewater management practices at the Abrolhos and the need for ongoing improvement, particularly noting the anticipated growth in tourism.

Climate Change

Given the location, topography and low-lying nature of most of the Abrolhos, the islands are becoming impacted by climate change, in particular through higher tides, sea level rise and extreme storm events. Sea level rise will continue to impact intertidal mangrove communities in the future. Furthermore, strong El Nino-Southern Oscillation events are known to impact the breeding success of some seabirds at the Abrolhos.

There are opportunities to take advantage of clean energy solutions, such as solar, on the Abrolhos Reserve. DPIRD will support and facilitate sustainable living choices, where possible, practical and cost-effective.

Management objectives and actions

The proposed management objectives and actions set out in the table below have been informed by the outcomes of the stakeholder engagement process and have been developed to achieve State Government objectives for the Abrolhos Reserve in relation to nature conservation and protection.

Management Objectives	Management Actions
<p><i>Provide increased protection for important flora, fauna and ecological communities on the Abrolhos Reserve.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve community and visitor education and understanding of the important natural values of the Abrolhos Reserve. 2. In partnership with DBCA and seabird conservation experts, support development of a contemporary code of conduct for human visitation to seabird breeding colonies. 3. Support implementation of the recovery plans that apply to the management of threatened fauna at the Abrolhos, including for the Australian sea lion, the Australian lesser noddy and the Abrolhos painted button-quail. 4. In conjunction with DBCA provide complementary management arrangements across the National Park and intertidal areas of the Abrolhos Reserve to enhance protection of important flora, fauna and ecological communities such as seabirds, migratory shorebirds and Australian sea lions. 5. Collaborate with DBCA to identify research priorities and knowledge gaps relating to flora, fauna, ecological communities and habitats on the Abrolhos Reserve and support relevant research and monitoring programs. 6. Work with partner agencies and stakeholders to explore and develop citizen science opportunities.
<p><i>Manage the impacts of Reserve users and land-based infrastructure on the natural values of the Abrolhos Reserve, National Park and FHPA.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Ensure that all Reserve users undertaking commercial operations on the Abrolhos Reserve complete an environmental risk management plan. 8. Consider additional mitigation measures to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. minimise human disturbance to breeding colonies of seabirds, particularly on North, West Wallabi and the Easter Group Islands; b. better manage human impacts to the population of tammar wallabies on West Wallabi Island; and

	<p>c. minimise human disturbance to mangrove communities on the Abrolhos Reserve.</p> <p>9. Incorporate best practice design principles into the assessment of new infrastructure on the Abrolhos Reserve to minimise wildlife disturbance (e.g. bird strike and impacts from artificial light).</p> <p>10. Where appropriate, facilitate rehabilitation of areas where camps and other infrastructure have been removed.</p>
<p><i>Minimise the impacts of priority weeds and pest animals on the natural values of the Abrolhos Reserve, National Park and FHPA through prevention, eradication, containment and control.</i></p>	<p>11. In collaboration with DBCA, develop and implement biosecurity requirements for the fishing, aquaculture, and tourism industries, under a priority risk-based framework.</p> <p>12. In collaboration with DBCA, support the development of an education program for visitors about the importance of biosecurity and the risks associated with weed and pest animal introductions.</p> <p>13. Eradicate Golden Crownbeard, Tamarisk, and Common Prickly Pear from the Abrolhos Reserve.</p>
<p><i>Manage the impacts of waste and pollution on the natural values of the Abrolhos Reserve, National Park and FHPA.</i></p>	<p>14. Continue to work with the bodies corporate, the CoGG and the Department of Health to ensure and promote best practice environmental waste management standards on the Abrolhos Reserve, and support the development of new solutions.</p> <p>15. Review and update the Abrolhos Islands Waste Management Standards and apply these to Reserve users to ensure acceptable waste management practices, including conditions on incinerator use.</p> <p>16. Amend the Regulations to ensure that any incinerator used on the Abrolhos Reserve for waste disposal must be of an approved type.</p> <p>17. Amend the Regulations to ensure that all camps must have approved wastewater systems.</p>

2.2 Cultural Heritage Protection

The history of the Arolhos is unique and colourful, dating back to 1619 when Frederick de Houtman and his crew of the United Dutch East India Company ship *Dordrecht* first encountered and named the Arolhos Islands. The islands are remarkably associated with the earliest periods of European history in Australia.

Cultural heritage values of the Arolhos include its rich maritime heritage, and history of the guano mining, fishing, tourism and defence industries. Little is known about Aboriginal cultural heritage values and archaeological evidence of Aboriginal occupation is limited. There is no Aboriginal native title at the Arolhos Islands but adjacent mainland out to three nautical miles is part of the Yamatji Nation.

The WA Museum is the statutory authority responsible for the management and protection of shipwrecks, associated sites, and relics under the State MA Act and the Commonwealth UCH Act. Most of the known and protected cultural heritage sites, such as those associated with the *Batavia* and *Zeewijk* shipwrecks, are now located within the National Park and in the waters of the Arolhos FHPA.

Cultural heritage values

The main cultural heritage value of the Arolhos Reserve relates to its rich history of the lobster (cray) fishing industry. The fishing industry was established at the Arolhos in the late 1800s. Initially, finfish, whales, seals, and sea cucumbers were caught. Development of the rock lobster fishing industry commenced in the 1920s and expanded during World War II when canned lobster was supplied to armed forces. During this time, some of the first fishing camps were constructed on the islands and by the 1930s more rock lobster fishers were living and working at the Arolhos. As entire families moved to the Arolhos during the seasonal fishing season, the fishing communities continued to grow, and schools, churches and community halls were built. The fishing camps' distinctive and colourful buildings have a unique aesthetic and social history, providing a colourful contrast to the whitewashed coral outcrops, and make a strong contribution to the identity and sense of place of the Arolhos. The ANZAC Day celebration and Two-Up at the Islands is a cultural tradition that continues to this day.

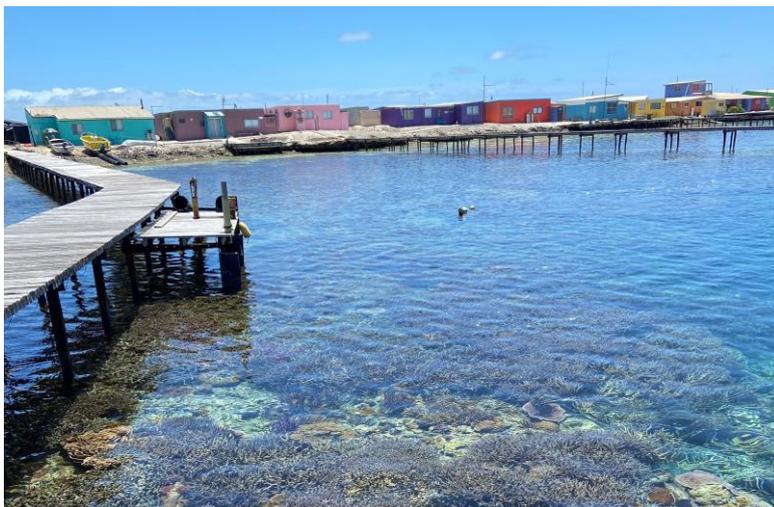


Image 24 & 25 – Colourful building character of Basile Island. Credit: DPIRD.

There are also cultural heritage features on the Abrolhos Reserve related to nineteenth-century guano mining. Guano is a natural fertiliser, predominantly made up of bird droppings, which was highly sought after in Europe and the United States at this time. The first commercial shipment of guano to leave the Abrolhos was in 1844 and guano continued to be mined at the Abrolhos until 1946. The remnants of buildings, jetties and tramways used for guano mining are still visible on some Reserve islands.

There is a clear stakeholder view that management of the cultural heritage values of the Abrolhos Reserve should focus on protecting and promoting the unique fishing heritage and guano mining heritage.

Places of cultural heritage interest on the Abrolhos Reserve include:

- the building character of the fishing communities, particularly Basile Island;
- the Basile Island Church;
- the North Island Fishing Community Museum; and
- structures associated with historical guano mining activity on Rat and Pigeon Islands.

There are also a number of stone buildings that have been erected on the Reserve of which the heritage value is currently unknown. These structures require assessment and a decision on future management.



Image 26 – Basile Island Church. **Image 27** – Stone cottage, Little Rat Island.

Credit: DPIRD.

The Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH) maintains the State Register of Heritage Places, a statutory list of places of important cultural heritage significance that represent the story of Western Australia's history and development and that are protected under the *Heritage Act 2018*. The Heritage Council of Western Australia makes assessments on the significance and eligibility of sites for protection under this Act. The Heritage Council has identified the Abrolhos as being a priority place for entry into the State Register of Heritage Places. DPIRD will engage with DPLH and the Heritage Council in relation to protecting identified cultural heritage sites on the Abrolhos Reserve, and determine the need and mechanism for any further assessments.

Management Objectives and Actions

The proposed management objectives and actions set out in the table below have been informed by the outcomes of the stakeholder engagement process and have been developed to achieve State Government objectives for the Abrolhos Reserve in relation to cultural heritage protection.

Management Objectives	Management Actions
<p><i>Promote greater community awareness and understanding of the unique fishing heritage associated with the Abrolhos Reserve.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collaborate with DBCA and the WA Museum in the development of interpretation material to increase visitor awareness, understanding and appreciation of the unique fishing heritage of the Islands. 2. Negotiate appropriate visitor access to body corporate land to places of cultural heritage interest and support the fishing community to develop and share their stories.
<p><i>Collaborate with stakeholders to identify and protect cultural heritage sites.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Engage with DPLH and the Heritage Council in relation to protecting identified cultural heritage sites on the Abrolhos Reserve, and the need and mechanism for further heritage assessments. 4. Collaborate with the bodies corporate to determine the ownership status and future management of the stone building structures on the Abrolhos Reserve. 5. In partnership with DBCA, maintain and interpret the guano mining heritage on Rat Island.
<p><i>Maintain the building character of the fishing communities at the Abrolhos.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Develop a building style guide that reflects the visual character of the Abrolhos fishing community, and is applied to the assessment of all new buildings and structures and any major camp improvements. 7. Collaborate with the Pelsaert Group Body Corporate in respect of maintaining the visual colour character of Basile Island.

2.5 Tourism

The appeal of the Abrolhos for tourism has long been recognised. Visitors are attracted to the unique sense of place and character of the Abrolhos, resulting from the landscape, natural values, maritime heritage, and the history and culture of the fishing and aquaculture community. Visitor activities include swimming, fishing, diving, snorkelling, surfing, wind/kite surfing, walking, bird watching and other nature appreciation, as well as guided tours of cultural heritage sites. Visitor access to the Abrolhos is via private vessel, charter vessel or aircraft.

In October 2017, the State Government made a commitment to develop a new whole-of-government approach to better protect the Abrolhos and create tourism opportunities, including the creation of a national park and a \$10 million funding allocation to assist with planning and provision of day-use visitor facilities in the Wallabi Group. In July 2019, the National Park was created. Since then, State Government, relevant agencies and stakeholders have been working together to design a new future for the Abrolhos. As set out in the Strategic Direction, State Government's vision for the Abrolhos is –

“to provide a world-class sustainable tourism experience and create new jobs and economic opportunities in the Mid West Region, while protecting the unique natural, cultural heritage, fishing and community values of the Abrolhos”

Government is committed to creating a world-class visitor destination that contributes to a vibrant regional economy with:

- extraordinary visitor experiences that share the unique stories of the Abrolhos' maritime heritage, industries, environments, wildlife and people;
- quality visitor facilities that reflect the unique character of the Abrolhos;
- targeted overnight stay opportunities appropriate for a range of visitor markets; and
- a suite of accredited land, marine and air-based tourism operators.

Current visitor activities

Currently, tourism occurs primarily within the Abrolhos FHPA and on the National Park and is limited on the Abrolhos Reserve due to the current body corporate lease arrangements. The leased areas of the Reserve and visitor access to the camps and jetties is not permitted without permission from the infrastructure owner.

Notwithstanding, tourism does occur on the Abrolhos Reserve and current activities include pearl farm tours and island visits undertaken as part of a commercial tour and the annual Pearls and Plates event on Post Office Island. There are opportunities to develop tourism activities on the Abrolhos Reserve, and these will be considered, in line with a set of guiding principles and management controls.

While this plan focuses on tourism growth opportunities on the Abrolhos Reserve, it is recognised that sustainable tourism development at the Abrolhos must be considered and planned across the land and water, and in close collaboration with partner agencies. The final approved management plans for the National Park, Abrolhos Reserve and Abrolhos FHPA will inform further cross-agency whole-of-Abrolhos tourism planning.



Image 28 – Pearls and Plates event, Post Office Island. Credit: Nic Duncan.

There is a lot that stakeholders agree on in respect of tourism at the Abrolhos. Stakeholders agree that tourism should build slowly, and the initial management focus should be on getting the required management frameworks in place and enhancing the existing visitor experience.

Guiding principles for sustainable tourism development

DPIRD has developed a set of guiding principles for tourism, which aims to align with community and stakeholder expectations. In planning for visitor access and infrastructure on the Abrolhos Reserve and considering new tourism developments, DPIRD supports and will endeavour to provide for –

- low impact, environmentally sensitive nature and culture-based tourism which is compatible with the key values of the Abrolhos;
- sustainable coexistence of tourism, fishing and aquaculture, ensuring that the community and social values of the fisher camp lifestyle are recognised;
- appropriate physical segregation of tourism from commercial fishing and aquaculture operations due to differing sector needs, where necessary;
- the use of existing underutilised infrastructure for tourism purposes where possible, to minimise the human footprint on the islands;
- accredited land, marine and air-based tourism operators to ensure the visitor experience involves best practice environmental and management standards;

- licensed commercial tour operators, and well-trained guides with local knowledge;
- controlled visitor access to high value / interest sites;
- low visitor numbers at visitor sites, especially sensitive sites, to conserve natural and cultural values, and retain the current amenity and feeling of remoteness;
- guided-only tours of fishing communities and aquaculture/pearl farms;
- improved interpretation, including limited on-island visitor signage, built in a way that minimises wildlife disturbance, and retains the raw nature of the islands;
- building of raised walkways and/or clearly marked designated pathways to provide for predictable human movement and reduce the human footprint on the islands; and
- development of low impact / low rise built structures and visitor facilities that retain the unique Abrolhos sense of place.

Tourism opportunities and proposed management

Integrating tourism on the Abrolhos Reserve is complex and requires consideration of multi-sector needs. While there may be opportunities for low-scale, low-impact tourism to develop within body corporate lease areas, there are existing barriers associated with current lease arrangements that need to be worked through with the bodies corporate for these opportunities to be realised. It is proposed that tourism activities on body corporate land are managed through the relevant body corporate, in close collaboration and partnership with DPIRD, through the issuing of tourism licences.

It is recognised that it might be appropriate in some cases for commercial tourism activities to occur on the Abrolhos Reserve outside of body corporate leased land, under separate land lease and licensing arrangements. This may be the case, for instance, if it is identified that the differing needs of the tourism and fishing and aquaculture sectors cannot sustainably coexist. This pathway could potentially result in changes to body corporate lease boundaries, through negotiation between the Minister for Fisheries and the relevant body corporate. Tourism activities on the Reserve, outside of body corporate land, will be managed by DPIRD, in close consultation with partner agencies, the bodies corporate and relevant stakeholders.

DPIRD has identified the following opportunities for tourism growth on the Abrolhos Reserve. Importantly, this does not preclude other opportunities from being considered during the life of this plan.

Overnight stays

1. New Built Commercial Tourist Accommodation

It is recognised that providing new purpose-built tourist accommodation options at the Abrolhos would significantly expand the tourism potential of the islands, allowing visitors to engage with and explore the islands over longer periods of time and increase the contribution of tourism to the regional economy.

- In order to protect the privacy of the existing commercial fishing and aquaculture communities, and ensure appropriate separation of uses, new purpose-built commercial tourist accommodation will not be considered within body corporate land.

- During the life of this plan, land-based commercial tourist accommodation options will be considered on three Reserve islands that also include National Park tenure: North, Rat and Leo Islands. DPIRD will work closely with DBCA to identify potential suitable locations for overnight stay opportunities on these islands.
- Proposals for purpose-built commercial tourist accommodation will be driven by private sector interest and investment and managed by DPIRD. The assessment process will involve broad consultation with relevant agencies and stakeholders.
- Proponents will require a Land Lease and a Tourism Licence and be subject to operational conditions.
- Accommodation infrastructure must be fit for public use, meet the required building, safety and wastewater requirements, and retain the Abrolhos sense of place. Any jetty that will be used by guests must be licensed for public use.

2. Hosted Fishing Camp Tourist Accommodation

There is a clear opportunity to provide visitors to the Abrolhos the unique experience of staying overnight in fishing camps, being hosted by a local fisherman. This will also provide opportunities for current commercial operators to diversify their business and support authentic agritourism experiences.

- This opportunity will be driven by interest from body corporate members and managed within the relevant body corporate framework. Importantly, depending on the level of interest, there may be a need to restrict this offering, and development of this opportunity will likely require a strategic approach across the island groups.
- Opportunities for hosted fishing camp tourist accommodation are not considered to be suitable across all inhabited Reserve islands and will be limited to identified islands, guided by the *Abrolhos Reserve Permitted Land Use Table* (refer 2.5 *Abrolhos Community*).
- The proposal must have support from the relevant body corporate. An assessment will be made on whether the camp location and proposed purpose has the potential to adversely impact on the occupation and use of neighbouring camps.
- The camp must comply with all building, safety and wastewater requirements to provide commercial accommodation required by the CoGG and the *Building Act*. Any jetty that will be used by guests must be licensed for public use.
- Proponents will require a Tourism Licence, issued by the Minister for Fisheries. Assessment criteria and conditions of approval and operation will be developed in consult with partner agencies and the bodies corporate.

3. Recreational Camping

Recreational camping on the Abrolhos Reserve will not be permitted.

DBCA will complete an assessment of islands in the National Park to determine their suitability for recreational camping. If camping is permitted in some locations in the National Park, and that activity spills over into adjacent Abrolhos Reserve intertidal areas, DPIRD will apply consistent arrangements to ensure practical management outcomes.

Day Visitation

1. Guided Day Tours

At some locations on the Abrolhos Reserve, there is the opportunity for visitors to have guided tours of the fishing community, and to view fishing or aquaculture operations. This is an excellent opportunity to share stories about the Abrolhos industries, the fishing heritage and the unique Abrolhos way of life, and for business diversification. Demand for guided day tours is expected to increase as expedition cruise ship visitation increases.

- This opportunity will be driven by interest from body corporate members and managed through the relevant body corporate framework.
- Opportunities for guided day tours are not considered to be suitable across all inhabited Reserve islands and will be limited to identified islands, guided by the *Abrolhos Reserve Permitted Land Use Table* (refer 2.5 *Abrolhos Community*).
- The proposal must have support from the relevant body corporate. An assessment will be made on whether the proposed guided tour has the potential to adversely impact on the occupation and use of neighbouring camps.
- Guided tours on the Abrolhos Reserve can only be conducted as part of a licensed and accredited commercial tour operation.
- Assessment criteria and conditions of approval and operation will be developed in consult with partner agencies and the bodies corporate.
- The camps or facilities must comply with all building, safety and wastewater requirements for the proposed purpose required by the CoGG and the *Building Act*. Any jetty to be accessed as part of the guided tour must be licensed for public use.

2. Retail, Food and Beverage Outlets

There is a clear opportunity to provide visitors to the Abrolhos unique retail and dining experiences on the Abrolhos Reserve. Fishing and aquaculture camps may be used wholly or partially for retail, food and beverage outlets.

- This opportunity will be driven by interest from body corporate members.
- Opportunities for retail, food and beverage outlets on the Abrolhos Reserve are not considered to be appropriate across all inhabited islands and will be limited to identified islands, guided by the *Abrolhos Reserve Permitted Land Use Table* (refer 2.5 *Abrolhos Community*).
- The proposal must have support from the relevant body corporate. An assessment will be made on whether the proposed activity has the potential to adversely impact on the occupation and use of neighbouring camps.
- The experiences and products offered must be consistent with the natural and cultural heritage values of the Abrolhos Reserve.
- Proposals will be managed under a Tourism Licence, issued by the Minister for Fisheries. Assessment criteria and conditions of approval and operation will be developed in consult with partner agencies and the bodies corporate.
- The facilities must comply with all building, safety and wastewater requirements for the proposed purpose required by the CoGG and the *Building Act*. Any jetty to be accessed by hospitality outlet clients must be licensed for public use.

3. Commercial Events and Functions

This may include food festivals, music festivals, and other functions or events undertaken for a commercial purpose.

- Opportunities for commercial events and functions on the Abrolhos Reserve are not considered to be appropriate across all inhabited islands and will be limited to identified islands, guided by the *Abrolhos Reserve Permitted Land Use Table* (refer 2.5 *Abrolhos Community*).
- The proposal must have support from the relevant body corporate. An assessment will be made on whether the proposed activity has the potential to adversely impact on the occupation and use of neighbouring camps.
- The experiences offered must be consistent with the natural and cultural heritage values of the Abrolhos.
- Assessment and approval of commercial events will be subject to assessment criteria and consultation with our partner agencies and the bodies corporate.
- Proponents will require a Tourism Licence and be subject to operational conditions.
- Any camps or facilities used must comply with all building, safety and wastewater requirements for the proposed purpose required by the CoGG and the *Building Act*. Any jetty to be accessed as part of the event must be licensed for public use.

In order to ascertain commercial interest in tourism ventures at the Abrolhos across tenures, a joint DBCA/DPIRD competitive process will be undertaken upon finalisation of the National Park, Abrolhos Reserve and Abrolhos FHPA management plans. This process will apply to proposed tourism ventures that require exclusive (permanent or semi-permanent) infrastructure access to land or water, and/or where a restricted commercial development opportunity exists and there is likely to be interest from more than one party. This is considered a fair and equitable process to assess applications and will ensure the most suitable applicant is selected and the best outcomes for the State are achieved.

Any tourism development on the Abrolhos Reserve will be carefully assessed to ensure that it enhances, or at least does not unacceptably impact on, the natural, cultural heritage, fishing and community values of the Abrolhos, and retains the Abrolhos sense of place. Proposals will also be assessed under the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* and the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, where appropriate, and any other relevant legislation.

Tourism – Operations Base

A key finding of the stakeholder engagement process was the need for marine tourism operators to have access to some island space to help to develop other recreational or cultural-based products for their visitor markets.

DPIRD is supportive of providing opportunities for commercial tour operators to have access to island infrastructure on the Abrolhos Reserve to support business development and improve visitor experiences.

- The camp holding arrangements for commercial tour operators will be consistent with the current arrangements in place for commercial rock lobster and aquaculture operators (fit for purpose).
- Infrastructure may be used for storage and staff accommodation purposes, but would not extend to tourist accommodation.
- Access to infrastructure by tour operators is not considered to be suitable across all inhabited Reserve islands and will be limited to identified islands, guided by the *Abrolhos Reserve Permitted Land Use Table* (refer 2.5 *Abrolhos Community*).

- The preference is for existing underutilised infrastructure to be used and repurposed where possible in order to minimise expansion of the human footprint on the islands.
- An application would be considered with the support of the relevant body corporate. An assessment will be made on whether the camp location has the potential to adversely impact on the occupation and use of neighbouring camps.

Visitor education and interpretation

Information, education and interpretation will be of critical importance for Abrolhos Reserve visitors to raise awareness of its values, promote support for its management, and encourage community involvement and appropriate behaviour. It is important for visitors to be well informed about which areas can be accessed, and which areas are privately leased. DPIRD will work closely with DBCA, the WA Museum and commercial tour operators, to ensure that accurate and appropriate information and resources are being provided to visitors.

DPIRD’s short-medium term management priorities for supporting sustainable tourism development on the Abrolhos Reserve are to:

- develop and implement a tourism management and licensing framework;
- enable opportunities for commercial tour operators to have operational bases on the Abrolhos Reserve to support their business;
- facilitate and support quality guided day tours on the Reserve;
- enable opportunities for body corporate members to diversify their business and offer hosted fishing camp accommodation; and
- provide an all access pathway on Rat Island that will enable visitors to safely transit from the airstrip to a multi-use public jetty.

Management objectives and actions

The proposed management objectives and actions set out in the table below have been informed by the outcomes of the stakeholder engagement process and have been developed to achieve State Government objectives for the Abrolhos Reserve in relation to tourism and visitor access.

Management Objectives	Management Actions
<p><i>Facilitate commercial tourism operations that provide visitors with quality low impact nature and culture-based experiences on the Abrolhos Reserve through effective management.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In collaboration with DBCA, conduct a competitive process to ascertain commercial interest in tourism ventures at the Abrolhos, across all tenures. 2. Develop and implement regulations, policies, an assessment and approval process and an administrative system to facilitate tourism licences on the Abrolhos Reserve. 3. Develop building and design guidelines for any new tourism infrastructure on the Reserve to ensure that the unique Abrolhos sense of place is maintained.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Introduce an approvals process to produce film, photography or any type of audio-visual productions for a commercial purpose or gain on the Abrolhos Reserve. 5. In collaboration with relevant agencies, assist in the development of a code of conduct and other relevant resources for Abrolhos-based tourism operators and tour guides. 6. Assist in the preparation of visitor site plans to manage visitor access and control visitor numbers through capacity setting, where required. 7. Support the preparation and implementation of an integrated interpretation program for the Abrolhos. 8. Monitor visitation to the Abrolhos Reserve and investigate ways to improve visitor data collection.
<p><i>Provide appropriate visitor access to the Abrolhos Reserve, while minimising impacts to the commercial fishing and aquaculture communities.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Ensure the privacy and needs of the commercial fishing and aquaculture communities are considered during visitor access planning processes, and the assessment of tourism development proposals. 10. Collaborate with the bodies corporate to facilitate tour operators operating in the FHPA to have operational bases on body corporate leased land, subject to an assessment process. 11. In consultation with the bodies corporate, develop guidelines, including an approvals process and criteria, for infrastructure access for commercial tour operators. 12. Collaborate with DBCA and the Easter Group Body Corporate to develop a public works project on Rat Island to provide an all access pathway that will enable the public to safely transit from the airstrip to a multi-use public jetty.
<p><i>In partnership with DBCA and the business sector plan and facilitate viable and sustainable tourist accommodation options at the Abrolhos.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Develop a licence application and approvals process, and assessment criteria, in respect of new purpose-built commercial tourist accommodation. 14. Develop a licence application and approvals process, and assessment criteria, in respect of hosted fishing camp tourist accommodation.

Facilitate appropriate day use tourism and services on some Reserve islands.

15. Facilitate guided day tour visitation to some Reserve islands for licensed marine tourism operators, including expedition cruise ships.
16. Establish guidelines to assess and permit appropriate day use visitor activities on the Arolhos Reserve that are consistent with the Arolhos sense of place and key values.
17. Collaborate with the bodies corporate to evaluate, and where appropriate, activate opportunities for the community halls and other community infrastructure on North, Pigeon, and Little Rat Islands to be part of the tourism offerings on the Arolhos Reserve.

2.4 Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture

The Abrolhos FHPA supports a wide range of fish and invertebrate species including dhufish, coral trout, baldchin groper, pink snapper and western rock lobster, making it a priority target area for recreational and charter fishing in the Mid West region.

Commercial fishing for western rock lobster, saucer scallops, mackerel and demersal scalefish such as pink snapper and baldchin groper occurs in the Abrolhos FHPA adjacent to the Reserve.

A range of aquaculture leases operate in the FHPA and the Mid West Aquaculture Development Zone has been established to encourage large-scale commercial aquaculture development in the area. An Aquaculture Plan is proposed to be developed for the Abrolhos and this is discussed in more detail in the Abrolhos FHPA draft management plan.



Image 29 – Coral aquaculture workshop, Basile Island. Credit: DPIRD.

Reserve access

A key purpose of the Abrolhos Reserve is to provide access to support the development of sustainable wild-capture fisheries and commercially viable aquaculture industries.

Under the current body corporate leases and Constitutional arrangements, access to body corporate leased land (which comprises the majority of the Abrolhos Reserve) is restricted to commercial rock lobster fishers and aquaculture operators. The Easter Group Body Corporate Lease (2007) provides for rock lobster MFL holders and aquaculture licensees to be able to apply to have camps and jetties on Easter Group body corporate land to support their commercial activities. The North Island, Wallabi and Pelsaert Group Body Corporate Leases were amended in 2013 to expand the categories of membership to enable fishing tour operator licence holders to have operational bases on body corporate land. However, the Body Corporate Constitutional arrangements have not been changed to reflect the updated leases and provide for charter membership.

It is important that the infrastructure needs of the commercial rock lobster industry and the developing aquaculture industry continue to be met. Notwithstanding, there is a strong view amongst the majority of stakeholders for the Reserve to shift from what has traditionally been a single sector industry to support multiple industry sectors, particularly given the increase in underutilised infrastructure in some areas of the Abrolhos Reserve.

It is recognised that opening up the Abrolhos Reserve to other commercial uses, such as other commercial fishery operators and fishing tour operators, needs to be managed carefully due to differing sector needs and increased potential for user-conflict. Access to the Reserve for other commercial fisheries and fishing tour operators will be managed and assessed, and there will need to be a clear demonstrated need for infrastructure.

Management objectives and actions

The proposed management objectives and actions set out in the table below have been informed by the outcomes of the stakeholder engagement process and have been developed to achieve State Government objectives for the Abrolhos Reserve in relation to sustainable fisheries and aquaculture.

Management Objectives	Management Actions
<p><i>Enable appropriate access to and occupancy of the Abrolhos Reserve to support sustainable wild-capture fisheries and commercially viable aquaculture operations.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure that appropriate infrastructure access continues to be available to support active commercial rock lobster operations. 2. Ensure that appropriate infrastructure access continues to be available to support aquaculture operators that have an achievable business plan, are commercially viable, and can provide a demonstrated need for access. 3. Amend the Regulations to enable access to the Abrolhos Reserve and camp ownership for all commercial fisheries. 4. Collaborate with the bodies corporate to facilitate operators of commercial fisheries operating in the Abrolhos FHPA to occupy body corporate leased land, subject to an assessment process. 5. Collaborate with the bodies corporate to facilitate fishing tour operators operating in the FHPA to have operational bases on body corporate leased land, subject to an assessment process. 6. Collaborate with the bodies corporate to develop guidelines, including an approvals process and criteria, for infrastructure access for the commercial fishing and aquaculture sectors.

2.3 Abrolhos Community

Community values

Rock lobster fishing commenced at the Abrolhos in the 1920s. Historically, fishers, crews and their families lived on the islands during the fishing season and built small houses known as camps. Over time, the island groups grew into distinct communities with schools, community halls and sporting fields. A strong community has developed over multiple generations and the fishers and their families have a long association, deep connection and very strong sense of place at the islands. The resident community has more recently expanded to include aquaculture operators and tourism businesses. Many other people in the wider community also share a sense of attachment to the Abrolhos.

For the purpose of this plan, the Abrolhos community is defined as the people who reside, work at and visit the islands, and share a sense of belonging, with common interests.



Image 30 – Pigeon Island School.

Credit: DPIRD.



Image 31 – North Island Community Hall.

Credit: DPIRD.

Adapting to change

In 2013, as a result of changes to the management of the West Coast Rock Lobster Fishery, the number of active rock lobster fishers at the Abrolhos reduced and there has subsequently been a loss in the sense of community. The distinctive 'fishing season' is no longer and fishers come and go in tune with their fishing activities. Fishing families no longer live at the Abrolhos for long periods, the schools have all closed, and many community events have ceased. There has also been an increase in the numbers of unutilised fishing camps.

"Seeing Change – A photographic story of Abrolhos fishers" (Shaw, 2013) was an initiative undertaken to provide a snapshot of the Abrolhos community and to document the fishing community's experience of environmental and social change at the Abrolhos during that time. Notwithstanding, many fishermen have been able to adapt and there remains an important fishing community with a strong sense of stewardship for the islands. This has been reinforced through the recent stakeholder engagement process and it is clear that the deep sense of place and community the current bodies corporate members express is profound.

“I was raised there and have raised my family there. It is not only our home but our community.”

“It is part of our life and who we are today. We feel blessed and very fortunate to have had this lifestyle.”

“My family has been crayfishing at the islands from just after World War II.”

“It is where all our families come together regardless of their separate lifestyles.”

Abrolhos Reserve and Fish Habitat Protection Area Consultation Report 2022

The Abrolhos community is once again experiencing a period of change. With the recent creation of the National Park and a clear State Government objective to facilitate sustainable tourism development, there will be new and potentially competing interests for island use over the next 10 years and beyond. It is critical that land use development is managed carefully in order to balance the needs of the sectors and importantly, protect the values that make the Abrolhos such a unique and special place.

Furthermore, all Reserve users and community members have a responsibility to develop an understanding of the activities and operations of their neighbours, and foster a high level of consideration and respect for each other.

Managing future land use

A key finding of the stakeholder engagement process is that management of the Reserve islands should support multi-sector industries and diversified businesses. Separating land uses and developing management regulations can help to mitigate the level of potential conflict between user groups.

An initiative of the State Government’s Strategic Direction is to facilitate sustainable economic development on the Abrolhos Reserve for a range of new commercial uses, consistent with the purposes of the Reserve, which are:

1. Conservation
2. Tourism
3. Fishing
4. Aquaculture

It is proposed that the future land use and development of the Abrolhos Reserve be guided by the **Proposed Abrolhos Reserve Permitted Land Use Table** (Table 2 and 2a). The permitted land use table has considered industry and community views and aims to present a balanced package that will maintain most of the current commercial fishing and aquaculture community and operational interests, while opening up new commercial opportunities on the Abrolhos Reserve in some areas.

As mentioned earlier in the draft plan, it is important to acknowledge that opening up body corporate leased land to new commercial opportunities, such as tourism, will require amendments to the current lease agreements, which will be subject to negotiation between the Minister for Fisheries and the Bodies Corporate.

Table 2 – Proposed Abrolhos Reserve Permitted Land Use Table.

PURPOSE	COMMERCIAL FISHING	AQUACULTURE	TOURISM				CONSERVATION		GOVERNMENT /UTILITIES
			Operations base	Day services	Hosted fishing camp accommodation	New purpose-built accommodation	Education & Research	Wildlife & Habitats	
North	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
West Wallabi	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	X	✓	X
Pigeon	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	-	✓
Little Pigeon	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	X	X	-	X
Alcatraz	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	-	X
Rat – North^	✓	✓	X	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓
Rat – South^	X	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bushby	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	X	-	X
Little Rat	✓	✓	X	✓	X	X	X	✓	X
Roma	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	X	-	X
Leo	✓	X	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓	X
Basile	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	X	X	-	X
Burnett	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	✓	X
Uncle Margie	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	X
Post Office	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	-	✓

PURPOSE	COMMERCIAL FISHING	AQUACULTURE	TOURISM				CONSERVATION		GOVERNMENT /UTILITIES
			Operations base	Day services	Hosted fishing camp accommodation	New purpose-built accommodation	Education & Research	Wildlife & Habitats	
Coronation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓
Newman	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	X
Nook	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	X	-	X
Rotondella	✓	✓	X	X	✓	X	X	-	X
Jackson	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X	-	X
Foale*	X	✓	X	X	X	X	X	-	X
Newbold*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X
Robertson*	✓	X	X	X	X	X	X	-	X

Table 2a – Legend

Purpose	Explanation of Land Use
Commercial fishing	Land may provide for camps which support commercial fishing operations. Commercial fishing authorisation required, subject to relevant assessment.
Aquaculture	Land may provide for camps which support aquaculture operations. Aquaculture licence required, subject to relevant assessment.
Tourism – Operations base	Land may provide an opportunity for an operations base to support a tourism business. This may include staff accommodation, but does not extend to tourist accommodation. Tourism, Fishing Tour Operator or Restricted Fishing Tour Operator licence required, and subject to relevant assessment.

Purpose	Explanation of Land Use
Tourism – Day services	Land may provide an opportunity for tourism day services, including guided tours, retail and dining outlets and commercial events/functions. Tourism licence required, subject to relevant assessment.
Tourism – Hosted fishing camp accommodation	Land may provide an opportunity for hosted fishing camp tourist accommodation within body corporate land. Tourism licence required, and subject to relevant assessment.
Tourism – New purpose-built accommodation	Land may provide an opportunity for new purpose-built tourist accommodation which would occur outside body corporate land on the Reserve or National Park tenure. Land lease required, tourism licence required, and subject to relevant assessment.
Conservation – Education & Research	Land may be suitable as a base for research and/or education groups.
Conservation – Wildlife & Habitats	Zoning recognises the presence of important flora, fauna and habitat communities on the Reserve and/or adjacent National Park areas, which may require additional protection measures. Land use development may be restricted or require a higher level of environmental assessment.
Government / Utilities	Land may be suitable for future State Government interests and/or telecommunications or utilities infrastructure.
<p>^ Rat – North – means the Reserve portion of Rat Island to the north of the DPIRD operations base.</p> <p>^ Rat – South – means the Reserve portion of Rat Island to the south of the DPIRD operations base.</p> <p>* Land use development or expansion will be restricted.</p>	

A brief summary of the rationale used to develop the *Abrolhos Reserve Permitted Land Use Table* is provided below, with a focus on each main island group.

North Island

- North Island is considered to have potential to develop into a multi-use island due to its high terrestrial conservation values, exceptional marine biodiversity values, fishing heritage values, tourism potential, remoteness, and airstrip access. To support tourism growth on North Island, there will be a need for investment in additional marine and land-based infrastructure to support any development, and impacts to the important conservation and community values of North Island will need to be carefully assessed.
- The permitted land use table recognises and seeks to maintain the existing commercial fishing and aquaculture community.
- If there is tourism growth on North Island in the future, there could be opportunities for tourism operators to have operational bases on the Reserve.
- There is potential for high quality purpose-built tourist accommodation options on North Island which would need to be appropriately separated from the existing fishing community. Accommodation options and potential suitable locations will be further explored with stakeholders during the life of this plan.
- There is potential for hosted fishing camp accommodation, subject to interest from body corporate members and appropriate assessment.
- The existing community infrastructure could support guided day tours, catering services and provide opportunities for functions and events.
- Due to its high terrestrial and marine conservation values, there may be an interest in future occupation by research and/or education groups.



Image 32 – North Island community. Credit: DPIRD, Shannon Conway.

Wallabi Group

- Marine-based and land-based tourism is anticipated to develop in the Wallabi Group, particularly associated with visitation to some National Park islands (i.e. East Wallabi Island, Beacon Island and other national heritage listed *Batavia* sites).
- The permitted land use table for the Abrolhos Reserve recognises and seeks to maintain Pigeon and Little Pigeon Islands as major hubs for commercial fishing.
- Given the anticipated growth in tourism in the Wallabi Group, there may be opportunities for commercial tour operators to have access to island space on the Reserve in some locations.
- The existing community infrastructure on Pigeon Island could support guided day tours, catering services and provide opportunities for functions and events.
- There is potential for hosted fishing camp accommodation options to enhance the existing tourism market, subject to interest from body corporate members and appropriate assessment.
- Due to the existing commercial use and capacity of the islands, and in order to respect the privacy and lifestyle of the existing fishing community, new purpose-built commercial tourist accommodation is not considered suitable on any of the Reserve islands in the Wallabi Group.
- Pigeon Island is considered to be suitable for a future research/education base or provide a suitable location for a future remote area nursing post.
- West Wallabi Island will remain zoned for priority use by the commercial fishing and/or aquaculture industry. Expansion or land use diversification will be limited due to high terrestrial biodiversity values and biosecurity risks, as well as significant coastal erosion issues in some areas of the Reserve. There may be a need to reduce the human footprint and/or relocate some fishing operations on West Wallabi Island during the life of this plan.



Image 33 – West Wallabi Island community. Credit: DPIRD.

Easter Group

- Easter Group has a unique set of natural values, and with its centrally based location and airstrip access, has the potential to develop into a tourism destination in its own right, or provide a good base for visiting the Abrolhos.
- Northern Rat Island (north of the DPIRD operations base), Bushby Island, Little Rat Island and Roma Island are major hubs for commercial fishing and will continue to be zoned for priority use by the commercial fishing and aquaculture industries. There is potential for day tourism services, such as guided tours, on Northern Rat and Little Rat Islands, subject to interest from body corporate members, and assessment.
- The south-eastern area of Rat Island (south of the DPIRD operations base) has been identified as a potential future tourism precinct in the Easter Group, spatially separated from the main fishing community on the north of the island. Future commercial tourist accommodation options, and any tourism operational bases required in the Easter Group, are proposed to be focussed in this area. Aquaculture activity that is compatible with, or supports, the tourism product will be permitted in this location. There will likely be a need for investment to develop a public multi-use jetty and suitable public access pathway from the airstrip to the jetty in this location to support tourism growth. It may be necessary to support relocation of existing commercial rock lobster operations currently located in this area, which will require negotiation with the Easter Group Body Corporate and relevant camp owners.
- Leo Island has significant tourism potential, and Government is seeking a transition to tourism and conservation purposes in the longer-term. The Reserve could provide an opportunity for low-impact, low-scale purpose-built tourist accommodation and/or support day-use visitor facilities. Impacts to the important conservation values of Leo Island, and coastal inundation risks, will need to be carefully assessed in considering future development. It will be necessary to support relocation of the existing commercial fishing operation on Leo Island at some point in the future.



Image 34 – Rat Island community, Easter Group. Credit: Tourism WA.

Pelsaert Group

- The Pelsaert Group islands are the closest to mainland Geraldton. Visitation is dominated by small private recreational vessels, undertaking largely water-based activities, and staying for short periods (1 – 3 days). Charter vessels also offer day trips to this island group. There is no airstrip access.
- Land-based commercial tourism development in the Pelsaert Group is restricted due to the low-lying nature of the islands, coral shale substrate, small size of some of the islands, and challenges in gaining safe access.
- New purpose-built tourist accommodation is not considered suitable on any of the Reserve islands in the Pelsaert Group.
- The permitted land use table recognises and seeks to maintain the existing commercial fishing and aquaculture communities, while also providing a range of opportunities for some Reserve islands to support the existing tourism market and enhance the day visitor experience.
- There are opportunities for tourism operators to have operational bases on some Reserve islands. There is also potential for hosted fishing camp accommodation, and tourism day services on some Reserve islands, subject to interest from body corporate members and appropriate assessment.
- Nook, Foale and Robertson Islands are not considered suitable for tourism and will remain zoned for priority use by the commercial fishing and/or aquaculture sectors.
- Expansion or land use development on Foale, Newbold and Robertson Islands will be restricted as these islands are being substantially impacted by coastal inundation. Occupancy is not considered sustainable, and there may be a need to remove these camps in the medium to long-term.



Image 35 – Basile Island community, Pelsaert Group.

During the life of the plan, there may be reasons of public interest to amend the *Abrolhos Reserve Permitted Land Use Table*. This will occur through public consultation, including input from the bodies corporate, and their members. The Minister for Fisheries is to approve any proposed amendments to the *Abrolhos Reserve Permitted Land Use Table*.

Managing Fishing Camps

There are a number of matters that need to be addressed in respect of camp management for commercial fishing and aquaculture use. There is a need to tighten some arrangements in order to ensure that fishing camps are being used for their intended purpose and for the benefit of the State, and to streamline and improve systems and processes where possible.

There is a clear stakeholder view that fishing camps must be used and properly maintained for the appropriate purpose, or otherwise removed, transferred or repurposed for another use.

The **outcomes** that Government is seeking in relation to the future management of fishing camps are:

- Improved administration through development of a digital structure registration system. This will provide a legal record of the ownership and transfer of ownership of fishing camps, buildings and other structures.
- Enhanced ownership arrangements by requiring that fishing camps be held in the name of a person who is responsible for the activities and operations of a commercial fishing or aquaculture business, or, as may be relevant, tourism. This will reduce the current issues and complexities around structure ownership and accountability.
- Improved management of fishing camp holdings that are above and beyond business requirements. Camp holding entitlements will be approved based on an assessment of the operational requirements of the individual commercial fishing or aquaculture operation, and will be no more than the maximum camp holding entitlement. In addition, a business, person or operator who holds multiple commercial fishing licences that are associated with a single fishing operation may only hold one set of camps (not a set of camps per licence) on one island. Similarly, an aquaculture operator with multiple leases, can only hold one set of camps on one island.
- Tightened controls around the use and occupation of fishing camps for private unconditional lifestyle purposes. Camps can only be used and occupied for the purposes of supporting an active commercial fishing or aquaculture operation. DPIRD will work with the bodies corporate to determine camps that are not associated with an active operation. If a camp is not supporting a commercial operation, or it is no longer active, or in the case of an aquaculture licence, is not satisfying development conditions, the owner will likely be required to surrender or transfer their camp.
- Improved management controls around the use and occupation of fishing camps for maintenance purposes. Occupation for the purpose of undertaking camp maintenance may only be in accordance with works undertaken by qualified tradesmen under a building permit or by the camp owner under an approved maintenance schedule. Maintenance occupation will be limited to a maximum of two weeks, unless otherwise approved.
- Enhanced arrangements for lifestyle use of fishing camps. DPIRD proposes to work with the bodies corporate to recognise and define lifestyle occupancy. The intent is to allow for an appropriate period of lifestyle use for the camp owner under certain agreed conditions.

- Updated eligibility criteria for commercial rock lobster operators. Noting that the new ARMA is likely to result in the preparation of an Aquatic Resource Use Plan (ARUP) for the West Coast Rock Lobster Fishery during the life of this plan, DPIRD will collaborate with the Western Rock Lobster Council during development of the ARUP to define appropriate camp ownership eligibility criteria for the commercial rock lobster industry.
- Provision for sub-leasing. A commercial fisher or aquaculture operator will be permitted to sub-lease their fishing camp/s for a maximum of five years to another active operator. This will help to minimise underutilisation of camps. The arrangement will also provide an avenue for an entry fisher that does not hold sufficient units and leases a number of units, to sub-lease for a period and build sufficient unit equity over time to be eligible for a camp.

It is proposed that the specific revised arrangements for management, eligibility, use and occupation of fishing camps be set out in an Administrative Guideline developed under the provisions of s 246 of the FRMA, which will be subject to public consultation, and once finalised, will be made publicly available.



Image 36 – Commercial fishing camp on Rat Island. Credit: DPIRD.

Buildings and structures

There are a number of existing arrangements to manage and administer buildings on the Abrolhos Reserve. There are also a number of other structures (towers, paths, memorials, sculptures, etc.) that are not formally managed. It is necessary that management arrangements are in place for the approval, ownership and maintenance of all structures, and that all structures erected on the Abrolhos Reserve are consistent with the unique Abrolhos sense of place.

A building and structure style guide, with appropriate minimum standards, will be established to ensure that all Reserve structures are consistent with the Abrolhos sense of place. This may include permitted building materials, a maximum building height, appropriate setbacks and a preferred colour scheme for external walls of buildings.

In recent years there has been a proactive program with body corporate members to improve the quality and safety of buildings and structures on the Abrolhos Reserve. This has included a targeted program to remove and demolish a number of derelict, unsound, and poor condition camps on the Abrolhos Reserve. This program will continue during the life of this plan.

Telecommunications

The Abrolhos Islands are located more than 60 km offshore and have limited digital and telecommunications coverage. DPIRD acknowledges that the lack of adequate communication between islands and between the Abrolhos and the mainland creates constraints for the Abrolhos community, visitors and during emergency situations.

There is a very clear stakeholder view supporting the need for improved mobile access and telecommunications across the Abrolhos.

The installation of small cell mobile phone towers will improve digital and telecommunications coverage at the Abrolhos in the short-term and emerging technologies are being investigated for broader coverage in the longer term.

DPIRD will continue to collaborate with DBCA and other relevant agencies and stakeholders to assess options for improving digital and telecommunications coverage at the Abrolhos and develop infrastructure where appropriate, and subject to funding.

Emergency response

Emergency response arrangements for the Abrolhos Reserve are developed by the Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC) for the CoGG, in which the Abrolhos Islands are included. In addition, each body corporate is required to maintain an emergency management plan for their lease area and conduct emergency risk assessments in accordance with the lease agreement.

Silver Chain has operated the Remote Area Nursing Post (RANP) at the Abrolhos for many years, under contract with the Department of Health. The RANP is located on Rat Island and also services Pigeon Island. It operates seasonally, typically between March and June. Nursing services are provided to camp residents, tourists and workers.

There is a clear stakeholder view that emergency response services could be further improved, and evacuation procedures, roles and responsibilities more clearly defined across agencies. This is particularly the case for the Pelsaert Group, which does not have an airstrip, or access to the nursing post, and is an increasingly popular location for tourism and recreation.

DPIRD will maintain its presence and active engagement on the District Emergency Management Committee and the LEMC and provide support where possible to lead agencies and the bodies corporate in respect of improving emergency services at the Abrolhos, and promoting awareness of current procedures.

The draft management plan for the Abrolhos FHPA discusses marine safety and emergency matters in more detail.



Image 37 – Silver Chain Nursing Post, Rat Island. Credit: DPIRD.

Community engagement

There is significant community interest in management of the Abrolhos across a wide range of sectors: commercial fishing, aquaculture, recreational fishing, tourism, conservation and heritage. DPIRD will continue working to build our relationship with the bodies corporate and will meet regularly to discuss and develop solutions to management and operational issues. DPIRD will also work with DBCA and our partner agencies to explore opportunities to increase engagement with other key local stakeholders and the wider community and share important management information relating to the Abrolhos.

Management objectives and actions

The proposed management objectives and actions set out in the table below have been informed by the outcomes of the stakeholder engagement process and have been developed to achieve State Government objectives for the Abrolhos Reserve in relation to the Abrolhos community.

Management Objectives	Management Actions
<p><i>Facilitate community involvement in and support for management of the Abrolhos Reserve.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In partnership with DBCA, explore opportunities to enhance community and stakeholder engagement with and involvement in the management of the Abrolhos Reserve and promote information sharing. 2. Continue to work towards strengthening the relationship and building trust between Government and the bodies corporate.

<p><i>Recognise and respect the social and community values of the fisher camp lifestyle.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Ensure that any activities which may impact on the social and community values of the fisher camp lifestyle are considered, assessed, and mitigated, where appropriate. 4. Recognise the value of fisher camp occupancy for lifestyle purposes, and work with the bodies corporate to develop conditions for lifestyle occupation.
<p><i>Facilitate sustainable economic development on the Abrolhos Reserve for a range of new commercial purposes, including tourism ventures.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Manage future land use and development of the Abrolhos Reserve in accordance with the <i>Abrolhos Reserve Permitted Land Use Table</i> at Table 2.
<p><i>Improve the management of all buildings and structures on the Reserve, and ensure appropriate access to and occupation of camps.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Develop an Administrative Guideline in relation to management, use and occupation of camps, and implement the arrangements through amendments to the Regulations and body corporate leases, as required. 7. Establish a digital structure registration system that provides a legal record of the ownership and transfer of ownership of structures. 8. Collaborate with the bodies corporate to determine the current status of occupation of fishing camps, and develop a strategy for managing any identified camps that are not associated with an active commercial fishing or aquaculture operation. 9. Develop an assessment and approvals process for all structures on the Reserve.
<p><i>Improve the quality, aesthetics and safety of camps, buildings and jetties.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Develop a building and structure style guide to ensure all structures meet minimum safety standards and are consistent with the Abrolhos sense of place. 11. Continue to collaborate with the bodies corporate to proactively remove all derelict, unsound, or poor condition camps on the Abrolhos Reserve.
<p><i>Improve public telecommunications to support community safety, visitor experiences and effective business practices of the tourism, fishing and aquaculture industries.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. In collaboration with DBCA, investigate options to improve digital and telecommunication coverage across the Abrolhos.

2.6 Governance

Whole-of-government management

A range of State Government agencies have management responsibilities at the Abrolhos, including DBCA, DPIRD, the Department of Local Government, Sport and Communities (WA Museum), the Department of Transport; the Department of Health; and the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation (Tourism WA). The Abrolhos also lies within the local government area of the CoGG.

In October 2017, the State Government made a commitment to develop a new whole-of-government approach to better protect the Abrolhos and create tourism opportunities, and this commitment was reaffirmed in the Strategic Direction (November 2020).

While this plan is one of a suite of plans that apply to the Abrolhos tenure, the natural, cultural heritage, tourism, fishing and community values of the islands and waters are intrinsically connected and DPIRD is committed to a well-integrated management approach capable of managing the values across the varying tenures.

An interagency governance framework will be established between key agencies to consider strategic matters and policy issues of shared responsibility and/or mutual interest, across tenures. At a local operational level, DBCA and DPIRD will undertake activities in accordance with annual collaborative operational plans.

Stakeholders agree there is a clear need to improve the consistency and transparency of decision-making by Government, and for governance frameworks and decision making to reflect the needs of all users.



Image 38 – Saville Kent Centre, Rat Island. Credit: DPIRD.

Body corporate governance

Prior to 2007, land occupancy of the Abrolhos Reserve by fishermen was governed through an individual annual *Abrolhos Land Occupancy License*. In 2007, the Minister for Fisheries entered into a formal land lease arrangement with the Abrolhos Islands land occupants, through the newly constituted four Abrolhos Islands Body Corporate groups. One intent of the lease was to devolve a significant percentage of government's land occupancy management functions to the respective bodies corporate, providing members with an opportunity to demonstrate a higher degree of stewardship, and effectively become a self-managing authority over their leased land.

In the last 14 years the bodies corporate have become a key and integral part of the Abrolhos community and the body corporate governance framework has provided a reasonably effective model to administer the buildings and occupation on the Abrolhos Reserve. The Constitutions connect members, unite fishers', and provide for bodies corporate members to be caretakers of the land and have input and ownership into how the lease areas are managed.

The body corporate model has also provided a number of challenges from both the bodies corporate perspective, and for the State Government in achieving the outcomes it seeks for the Abrolhos Reserve. There have been ongoing compliance issues and concerns by stakeholders of inconsistent application of rules and decisions within and across body corporate groups. Further the leases have created barriers to sustainable tourism development and economic diversification on body corporate leased land, which not only limits opportunities on the Reserve, but has also impacted the tourism offerings across the whole of the Abrolhos. The recently formed Abrolhos Bodies Corporate Council will help to improve management of some of these issues and challenges.

To unlock the local capacity for development, it is incredibly important that the body corporate governance model is sufficiently resourced to succeed. The diversification of land use on the Abrolhos Reserve, could provide one opportunity to increase revenue for both the bodies corporate and the State.

The leases have a 21-year term. The Easter Group Body Corporate is managed in accordance with the original 2007 lease, which expires in 2028. North Island, Wallabi Group and Pelsaert Group signed up to a new lease in 2013, with the leases expiring in 2034. The leases cannot be varied unless there is agreement by both parties. The (2013) leases are required to be reviewed at three-year intervals, or otherwise by agreement, with the last review completed in 2013.

DPIRD considers that it is timely to undertake a formal review of all four body corporate leases in light of the release of the Government's Strategic Direction and new management plans and direction for the Abrolhos Reserve, Abrolhos FHPA and National Park. Further, the implementation of the ARMA in relation to development of an ARUP for the West Coast Rock Lobster Fishery will affect the operation of the current leases, and they will require amendment in due course. Resourcing opportunities will be considered as part of the lease review, as well as identifying opportunities to create consistency across the leases and Constitutions.

It is important for the body corporate leases to continue to address current issues, have the capacity to continually improve land management practices and aim to meet the needs of both the State Government and the bodies corporate membership.

During the life of the management plan, there will also be a need to commence planning for a longer-term governance framework for the Abrolhos Reserve that will extend beyond the life of the current body corporate lease agreements, and will support the management and development of the Abrolhos consistent with State Government and community aspirations.

Performance, monitoring and review

Progress towards achieving the objectives of this plan will be demonstrated by regular monitoring, evaluation, and reporting to investigate the effectiveness of management actions and identify opportunities for improvement. The status of implementation of the management actions will be monitored annually, and a five-year public review of the plan will commence in 2027.

DPIRD will continue to collaborate with partner agencies and research organisations to carry out or support targeted research programs that monitor flora and fauna on the Abrolhos Reserve, and improve our understanding of cultural heritage values. The outcomes of these programs will help to inform future planning and management.

Management objectives and actions

The proposed management objectives and actions set out in the table below have been informed by the outcomes of the stakeholder engagement process and have been developed to achieve State Government objectives for the Abrolhos Reserve in relation to governance and management effectiveness.

Management Objectives	Management Actions
<i>Work with partner agencies to establish a cooperative and effective inter-agency approach that will facilitate seamless management across all tenures.</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Set up an appropriate and ongoing governance framework to work collaboratively with DBCA, the WA Museum and other relevant agencies to enhance understanding, management and protection of key values across tenures. 2. Work with partner agencies to improve cooperative operational management arrangements across all tenures including sharing of services and assets, collaborative operational planning, and cross-authorisation of staff.
<i>Ensure that Reserve legislation and policy is contemporary and fit for purpose, and that decision-making processes are consistent and transparent.</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Work with industry and stakeholders to develop and implement contemporary Abrolhos Reserve policies and legislation in accordance with the priorities and timeframes set out in this plan.
<i>Implement, monitor and review management actions, and support collaborative research that is aimed at informing future planning and management.</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Monitor implementation of this plan through: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. annual monitoring on the status of implementation of actions; and b. a formal mid-term review.

	<p>5. Continue to support research programs that monitor natural and cultural heritage values on the Abrolhos Reserve and identify opportunities to collaborate with partner agencies and research organisations to carry out targeted research programs to support management.</p>
<p><i>Improve the effectiveness of the Body Corporate lease model.</i></p>	<p>6. In collaboration with the bodies corporate, commence a formal review of the current body corporate leases to seek alignment with the management plan and ensure future capacity for commercial use of the Abrolhos Reserve in respect of fishing, aquaculture and tourism.</p> <p>7. Review the access and administrative cost arrangements for the bodies corporate and the category of structure owners on the Abrolhos Reserve.</p> <p>8. Develop a long-term plan for ongoing governance of the Abrolhos Reserve.</p>
<p><i>Seek and obtain adequate funding and resources required to effectively achieve State Government's strategic direction for the Abrolhos Reserve.</i></p>	<p>9. Introduce a long-term sustainable funding and resourcing framework to support effective administration and management of the Abrolhos Reserve.</p> <p>10. Develop and implement fee schedules for approvals and licences on the Abrolhos Reserve.</p>

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Glossary

Term, acronym or abbreviation	Definition or term in full
Abrolhos	Houtman Abrolhos (land and waters)
Abrolhos FHPA	Abrolhos Islands Fish Habitat Protection Area
Abrolhos Reserve	All the land and waters contained in Class A Reserve 20253 (vested in the Minister for Fisheries)
ARMA	<i>Aquatic Resources Management Act 2016</i>
ARUP	Aquatic Resource Use Plan
Bodies Corporate	The Abrolhos Islands Bodies Corporate which is comprised of four body corporate groups
Class A Reserve	A form of tenure of Crown land having the greatest degree of protection
CoGG	City of Greater Geraldton
Crown land	Public lands, owned by the Government
DBCA	Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions
DPIRD	Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
FRMA	<i>Fish Resources Management Act 1994</i>
High water mark	The highest point reached by a high tide
Intertidal area	The area that sits between the low and high water mark
LA Act	<i>Land Administration Act 1997</i>
Low water mark	The lowest point reached by a low tide
Mid West Region	Mid West Region of Western Australia as defined in the <i>Regional Development Commissions Act 1993</i>
National Park	Houtman Abrolhos Islands National Park (vested in the Conservation and Parks Commission)
Regulations	<i>Fish Resources Management Regulations 1995</i>
State waters	The area of waters within the limits of the State of Western Australia adjacent to the Abrolhos Islands from the high water mark to the seaward limits of the coastal waters of the State
Strategic Direction	The Houtman Abrolhos Islands Strategic Direction 2020 – 24
Tenure	The manner in which a party holds or occupies land
Tourism Licence	Means a licence granted by the Minister for Fisheries to permit tourism activity at the Abrolhos, which may include a Fishing Tour Operator Licence.
This Plan	The Houtman Abrolhos Islands Reserve Draft Management Plan 2022
WA Museum	Western Australian Museum

Appendix 1 – Prioritised Summary Action Table

- 1 Immediate implementation
- 2 Short-term – within one – two years
- 3 Mid-term – within five years
- 4 Long-term – within 10 years, or ongoing

N/A – supporting role only

[Additional funding may be required]

Management Actions – Nature Conservation and Protection	Relative Priority
Improve community and visitor education and understanding of the important natural values of the Abrolhos Reserve.	1
In conjunction with DBCA provide complementary management arrangements across the National Park and intertidal areas of the Abrolhos Reserve to enhance protection of important flora, fauna and ecological communities such as seabirds, migratory shorebirds and Australian sea lions.	1
Collaborate with DBCA to identify research priorities and knowledge gaps relating to flora, fauna, ecological communities and habitats on the Abrolhos Reserve and support relevant research and monitoring programs.	[2]
Consider additional mitigation measures to: a) minimise human disturbance to breeding colonies of seabirds, particularly on North, West Wallabi and the Easter Group Islands; b) better manage human impacts to the population of tammar wallabies on West Wallabi Island; and c) minimise human disturbance to mangrove communities on the Abrolhos Reserve.	[2]
Incorporate best practice design principles into the assessment of new infrastructure on the Abrolhos Reserve to minimise wildlife disturbance (e.g. bird strike and impacts from artificial light).	2
Review and update the Abrolhos Islands Waste Management Standards and apply these to Reserve users to ensure acceptable waste management practices, including conditions on incinerator use.	[2]
Amend the Regulations to ensure that any incinerator used on the Abrolhos Reserve for waste disposal must be of an approved type.	2
Amend the Regulations to ensure that all camps must have approved wastewater systems.	2
Eradicate Golden Crownbeard, Tamarisk, and Common Prickly Pear from the Abrolhos Reserve.	3

Management Actions – Nature Conservation and Protection	Relative Priority
In collaboration with DBCA, develop and implement biosecurity requirements for the fishing, aquaculture, and tourism industries, under a priority risk-based framework	[3]
In collaboration with DBCA, support the development of an education program for visitors about the importance of biosecurity and the risks associated with weed and pest animal introductions.	[3]
Work with partner agencies and stakeholders to explore and develop citizen science opportunities.	4
Ensure that all Reserve users undertaking commercial operations on the Abrolhos Reserve complete an environmental risk management plan.	4 (ongoing)
Where appropriate, facilitate rehabilitation of areas where camps and other infrastructure have been removed.	4 (ongoing)
Continue to work with the bodies corporate, the CoGG and the Department of Health to ensure and promote best practice environmental waste management standards on the Abrolhos Reserve, and support the development of new solutions.	N/A
In partnership with DBCA and seabird conservation experts, support development of a contemporary code of conduct for human visitation to seabird breeding colonies.	N/A
Support implementation of the recovery plans that apply to the management of threatened fauna at the Abrolhos, including for the Australian sea lion, the Australian lesser noddy and the Abrolhos painted button-quail.	N/A

Management Actions – Cultural Heritage Protection	Relative Priority
Collaborate with DBCA and the WA Museum in the development of interpretation material to increase visitor awareness, understanding and appreciation of the unique fishing heritage of the Islands	[2]
Collaborate with the bodies corporate to determine the ownership status and future management of the stone building structures on the Abrolhos Reserve.	2
Collaborate with the Pelsaert Group Body Corporate in respect of maintaining the visual colour character of Basile Island.	3
Negotiate appropriate visitor access to body corporate land to recognised places of cultural heritage interest and support the fishing community to develop and share their stories.	3

Management Actions – Cultural Heritage Protection	Relative Priority
Develop a building style guide that reflects the visual character of the Abrolhos fishing community, and is applied to the assessment of all new buildings and structures and any major camp improvements.	[3]
Engage with DPLH and the Heritage Council in relation to protecting identified cultural heritage sites on the Abrolhos Reserve, and the need and mechanism for further heritage assessments.	3
In partnership with DBCA, maintain and interpret the guano mining heritage on Rat Island.	4

Management Actions – Tourism	Relative Priority
In collaboration with DBCA, conduct a competitive process to ascertain commercial interest in tourism ventures at the Abrolhos, across all tenures.	1
Develop and implement regulations, policies, an assessment and approval process and an administrative system to facilitate tourism licences on the Abrolhos Reserve.	[1]
Develop a licence application and approvals process, and assessment criteria, in respect of new purpose-built commercial tourist accommodation.	[1]
Develop a licence application and approvals process, and assessment criteria, in respect of hosted fishing camp tourist accommodation.	[1]
Establish guidelines to assess and permit appropriate day use visitor activities on the Abrolhos Reserve that are consistent with the Abrolhos sense of place and key values.	[1]
Collaborate with the bodies corporate to facilitate tour operators operating in the FHPA to have operational bases on body corporate leased land, subject to an assessment process.	2
In consultation with the bodies corporate, develop guidelines, including an approvals process and criteria, for infrastructure access for commercial tour operators.	2
Facilitate guided day tour visitation to some Reserve islands for licensed marine tourism operators, including expedition cruise ships.	2
Introduce an approvals process to produce film, photography or any type of audio-visual productions for a commercial purpose or gain on the Abrolhos Reserve.	2
Assist in the preparation of visitor site plans to manage visitor access and control visitor numbers through capacity setting, where required	3

Management Actions – Tourism	Relative Priority
Develop building and design guidelines for any new tourism infrastructure on the Reserve to ensure that the unique Abrolhos sense of place is maintained.	[3]
Collaborate with DBCA and the Easter Group Body Corporate to develop a public works project on Rat Island to provide an all access pathway that will enable the public to safely transit from the airstrip to a multi-use public jetty.	[3]
In collaboration with relevant agencies, assist in the development of a code of conduct and other relevant resources for Abrolhos-based tourism operators and tour guides.	N/A
Support the preparation and implementation of an integrated interpretation program for the Abrolhos.	N/A
Collaborate with the bodies corporate to evaluate, and where appropriate, activate opportunities for the community halls and other community infrastructure on North, Pigeon, and Little Rat Islands to be part of the tourism offerings on the Abrolhos Reserve.	4
Ensure the privacy and needs of the commercial fishing and aquaculture communities are considered during visitor access planning processes, and the assessment of tourism development proposals.	4 (ongoing)
Monitor visitation to the Abrolhos Reserve and investigate ways to improve visitor data collection.	4 (ongoing)

Management Actions – Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture	Relative Priority
Ensure that appropriate infrastructure access continues to be available to support active commercial rock lobster operations.	1
Ensure that appropriate infrastructure access continues to be available to support aquaculture operators that have an achievable business plan, are commercially viable, and can provide a demonstrated need for access.	1
Amend the Regulations to enable access to the Abrolhos Reserve and camp ownership for all commercial fisheries.	2
Collaborate with the bodies corporate to facilitate operators of commercial fisheries operating in the Abrolhos FHPA to occupy body corporate leased land, subject to an assessment process.	2
Collaborate with the bodies corporate to facilitate fishing tour operators operating in the FHPA to have operational bases on body corporate leased land, subject to an assessment process.	2

Management Actions – Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture	Relative Priority
Collaborate with the bodies corporate to develop guidelines, including an approvals process and criteria, for infrastructure access for the commercial fishing and aquaculture sectors.	2

Management Actions – Abrolhos Community	Relative Priority
Manage future land use and development of the Abrolhos Reserve in accordance with the <i>Abrolhos Reserve Permitted Land Use Table</i> at Table 2 .	[1]
In partnership with DBCA, explore opportunities to enhance community and stakeholder engagement with and involvement in the management of the Abrolhos Reserve and promote information sharing.	2
Collaborate with the bodies corporate to determine the current status of occupation of fishing camps, and develop a strategy for managing any identified camps that are not associated with an active commercial fishing or aquaculture operation.	2
Develop an Administrative Guideline in relation to management, use and occupation of camps, and implement the arrangements through amendments to the Regulations and body corporate leases, as required.	2
Recognise the value of fisher camp occupancy for lifestyle purposes, and work with the bodies corporate to develop conditions for lifestyle occupation.	2
Develop an assessment and approvals process for all structures on the Reserve.	2
Establish a digital structure registration system that provides a legal record of the ownership and transfer of ownership of structures.	[3]
Develop a building and structure style guide to ensure all structures meet minimum safety standards and are consistent with the Abrolhos sense of place.	[3]
In collaboration with DBCA, investigate options to improve digital and telecommunication coverage across the Abrolhos.	4 (ongoing)
Continue to work towards strengthening the relationship and building trust between Government and the bodies corporate.	4 (ongoing)
Continue to collaborate with the bodies corporate to proactively remove all derelict, unsound, or poor condition camps on the Abrolhos Reserve.	4 (ongoing)
Ensure that any activities which may impact on the social and community values of the fisher camp lifestyle are considered, assessed, and mitigated, where appropriate.	4 (ongoing)

Management Actions – Governance	Relative Priority
Work with partner agencies to improve cooperative operational management arrangements across all tenures including sharing of services and assets, collaborative operational planning, and cross-authorisation of staff.	1
Set up an appropriate and ongoing governance framework to work collaboratively with DBCA, the WA Museum and other relevant agencies to enhance understanding, management and protection of key values across tenures.	1
In collaboration with the bodies corporate, commence a formal review of the current body corporate leases to seek alignment with the management plan and ensure future capacity for commercial use of the Abrolhos Reserve in respect of fishing, aquaculture and tourism.	[1]
Introduce a long-term sustainable funding and resourcing framework to support effective administration and management of the Abrolhos Reserve.	2
Develop and implement fee schedules for approvals and licences on the Abrolhos Reserve.	2
Review the access and administrative cost arrangements for the bodies corporate and the category of structure owners on the Abrolhos Reserve.	2
Monitor implementation of this plan through annual monitoring on the status of implementation of management actions.	2
Monitor implementation of this plan through a mid-term review.	3
Develop a long-term plan for ongoing governance of the Abrolhos Reserve.	4
Work with industry and stakeholders to develop and implement contemporary Abrolhos Reserve policies and legislation in accordance with the priorities and timeframes set out in this plan.	4 (ongoing)
Continue to support research programs that monitor natural and cultural heritage values on the Abrolhos Reserve and identify opportunities to collaborate with partner agencies and research organisations to carry out targeted research programs to support management.	4 (ongoing)